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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (*continued*) (A/45/541, A/45/548; A/C.5/45/3, A/C.5/45/10 and Corr.1, A/C.5/45/11, A/C.5/45/12, A/C.5/45/18 and A/C.5/45/19)

1. Mr. AL-MANAI (Qatar) said that the secretariats of the Organization and its specialized agencies constituted the backbone of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General was exerting his best efforts to ensure that staff were recruited in accordance with the terms of Article 101 of the Charter and was also striving to defend the dignity and integrity of international civil servants who were exposed to treatment which was incompatible with international law.

2. With regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, his delegation noted from the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541) that a number of countries, including the six members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, were underrepresented or entirely unrepresented. Table 10 indicated that the members of the Council were represented by only eight United Nations staff members, whereas the mid-point for the desirable range of each individual country ranged between 7 and 22. Two of those countries, Bahrain and Kuwait, were entirely unrepresented. One of the eight posts filled by nationals of Gulf Co-operation Council countries was at the D-1 level; all the others were at lower levels. His own country was represented by only one staff member, on a fixed-term contract at the P-2 level. Such a level of representation was inappropriate for States which made major contributions to the United Nations budget, and his country reserved its right to insist on a higher level of representation in due course.

3. Mr. MA Longde (China), speaking on agenda item 126 (c) and referring to the report of the Secretary-General on secondment from government service (A/C.5/45/12), said that secondment was a long-standing practice both among international agencies and between those agencies and Governments. The practice was acknowledged by the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations and General Assembly resolutions, especially resolution 35/210. It had, moreover, proved to be an effective personnel policy, enabling the Organization to secure the services of skilled and experienced staff, and both the Organization and Governments to benefit from the return to their country of persons with experience and understanding of the United Nations. The establishment of the United Nations Language Training Programme in Beijing 10 years previously had solved the Organization's Chinese translation and interpretation problem and had strengthened personnel exchanges between the United Nations and the Chinese Government. Secondment also helped to keep a proper ratio between staff members on fixed-term contracts and those on permanent contracts. Both systems had their merits and shortcomings, and complemented each other.

4. His delegation disagreed with the statement in paragraph 5 of the report that secondment "could, under certain circumstances, undermine the achievement of the Secretary-General's resolve to enhance the independence and efficiency of the Secretariat in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations", and saw no logical connection between the secondment system and the independence of United Nations staff. The key to independence hinged on genuine

(Mr. Ma Longde, China)

compliance by the staff with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations depended mainly on the calibre of the staff and effective administrative management, and not on forms of staff appointment. Attempts to improve efficiency by revoking or restricting the secondment system would be ill-advised.

5. His Government had objections to Judgement No. 482 recently given by the Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations, and particularly to the argument that "the contractual arrangements to which the applicants were parties had not been genuine secondment". Secondment procedures between Member States and the Secretariat were not the same as inter-agency secondment procedures and should not be copied from them. The standard practice in secondment from government service, which was conducted on the principle of tripartite agreement between the United Nations, the Government of the Member State concerned and the staff member and consisted of an exchange of official notes and a letter of appointment clearly stating that the staff member would be serving on a secondment basis, was valid and legal and should be further affirmed and approved by the General Assembly at its current session.

6. His Government had always strictly adhered to the accepted secondment procedures. On their return home, staff members seconded from the Chinese Government had always secured the promotion and benefits to which they were entitled after service at the United Nations, which indeed gave many of them a better chance of promotion. His Government, moreover, continued to provide benefits to them and their dependants during their period of service with the United Nations. The fact that the applicants in the case in question had submitted their resignation before seeking permanent contracts with the United Nations proved that they themselves admitted that their services at the United Nations had been on the basis of secondment. The mechanical application of inter-agency secondment procedures to secondment from government service was unacceptable. Judgement No. 482 rendered all the formal exchanges of letters between Member States practising the secondment system and the Secretariat meaningless, and suggested that the status of some 500 staff on secondment from 51 countries, including many senior officials, was no longer valid. The judgement of the Administrative Tribunal had erred in the identification of the facts and in the application of law.

7. The Administrative Tribunal's criticism of the Secretary-General for allegedly violating the relevant provisions of the Charter by approaching the Member State concerned for its views regarding the extension of the contracts of the staff on secondment was unfounded, since the Secretary-General had acted within the legitimate framework of the aforementioned tripartite agreement and had merely been exercising his administrative rights and fulfilling his obligations. To suggest that, in doing so, he had been asking for or accepting instructions from any Government or authorities outside the Organization would be tantamount to saying that the submission of the medium-term plan or the outline of the programme budget to Member States for their views was in violation of the spirit of the Charter.

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(Mr. Ma Longde, China)

8. Judgement No. 482 of the Administrative Tribunal had created difficulties for the Secretariat in staff appointment and management. Although his Government could not accept that judgement, it did not oppose the suggestion in paragraph 13 of the report that amendments should be made to the Staff Regulations to improve United Nations procedures on secondment from Governments, subject, however, to the prerequisite that the validity and legitimacy of the existing secondment system and its procedures should be affirmed. On that premise and in a spirit of co-operation, his delegation would study the suggestions made in the report. Meanwhile, several dozen graduates from the United Nations Language Training Programme in Beijing were awaiting recruitment, and it was the Secretariat's responsibility to solve that problem. His Government would continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat on personnel questions.

9. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community on item 126 (b) and expressing their support for action by the Secretary-General in ensuring respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations, said that the situation in that area was still alarming and that recent developments on the international scene gave no ground for optimism. The report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/10) gave evidence of cases in which even parties which declared their support for the Organization and sought its assistance disregarded the privileges and violated the immunities of its staff. That was unacceptable and might prejudice claims for assistance from the international community other than in compelling humanitarian circumstances. It emerged from the report that new cases had arisen since the previous year. The Twelve appealed to all Governments and other groups responsible for the illegal detention of United Nations staff members to release them immediately. As in previous years, the Twelve wished to remember the case of Alec Collett who had been missing without news since 1985. The Twelve were concerned about all such violations, deeming unacceptable the disregard for Article 105 of the Charter of the United Nations displayed by some Member States. They strongly urged all Member States scrupulously to respect the privileges and immunities of all officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations.

10. The prompt administration of justice in all fields was always necessary. The argument that domestic rules must be respected and the appropriate evidence gathered was a pretext that caused unnecessary and unacceptable delays. There was no excuse for failure to respect Article 105 of the Charter and the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and to provide the competent United Nations authority with adequate and timely information about staff members or to allow access to them. Arbitrary detention, or negligence, or even excessive zeal and red tape which might constitute an obstruction to United Nations activities must be severely condemned. The Twelve renewed their appeal to all Governments for solidarity in exerting every possible pressure in order to ensure respect for international law.

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11. Mr. KIRUTTINAN (India) commended the improved transparency of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541). His delegation agreed that a concerted effort was required to improve further the quality of personnel recruited to the Secretariat in order to meet the challenge of its various complex problems and tasks. The recruitment of competent personnel would undoubtedly be facilitated if Member States provided adequate resources to the Secretary-General, improved the conditions of service of staff members and ensured that Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter were rigorously respected.

12. The decline in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented States was encouraging: if Member States in those categories were to propose the candidacies of men and women qualified for available posts, their number might be reduced yet further. With regard to the alternative proposals for groupings of Member States, his delegation would prefer tables to be organized in accordance with regional groupings, in order to ensure maximum homogeneity and transparency. It also hoped that future reports would include information on the representation of Member States in posts funded from extrabudgetary resources and on the criteria applied for recruitment to such posts.

13. The decision to review desirable ranges contained in General Assembly resolution 42/220 A referred to the requirement of raising the percentage weight of the population factor. That factor had been unjustly reduced from 7.2 to 5 per cent in order to reach a consensus in 1987. His delegation urged that the earlier weight of the factor be restored in order to make the composition of the Secretariat more equitable.

14. The inclusion in the report of a separate section on the representation of developing and other countries was welcome. Noting that the representation of developing countries at the senior levels had declined over the past five years, he said his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would endeavour to correct that imbalance in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/185 A and other pertinent resolutions. Another problem could be seen in the resistance of a small group of countries to rotation in the upper echelons of the Secretariat.

15. While pleased to note the rise in the percentage of women in geographic posts over the past 10 years, his delegation was concerned that so few of the women appointed to such posts over the past year had come from developing countries. The Secretary-General should increase his efforts to recruit women from developing countries in accordance with resolutions of the General Assembly.

16. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to train staff in office automation procedures, basic supervisory skills and other related fields and also endorsed the idea put forward by the Assistant Secretary-General for personal promotion at the G-1 to G-5 and P-2 to P-4 levels based on merit and seniority in order to raise staff morale and motivation. However, the question of additional financial costs and the impact on desirable ranges would have to be carefully considered.

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(Mr. Kiruttinan, India)

17. While agreeing with the Secretary-General that secondment from government service provided a means of obtaining skilled and experienced staff, his delegation believed that recruitment of that nature should conform with the provisions of the Charter, General Assembly resolutions and the overall interests of the Organization, including the financial costs to Member States.

18. Mr. WILENSKI (Australia), speaking on behalf also of the delegations of Canada and New Zealand on agenda item 126 (c), said that after the many resolutions and fine speeches and, indeed, the now five-year-old action plan (A/C.5/40/30) to improve the status of women in the Secretariat, only 2 of the 45 most senior posts in the Secretariat were now held by women - half the number of women in those positions when the action plan had been initiated. If the causes of the failure were not pinpointed, their number might dwindle still further, while the number of women at the lowest levels continued to grow. Those figures added urgency to the three countries' appeal in the Third Committee for the Secretariat to evaluate and analyse barriers to the advancement of women in the Secretariat.

19. Full commitment at the most senior levels to the advancement of women, demonstrated by clear assertions of support for a programme, by location of that programme in a high visibility spot, by the provision of appropriate operational authority and resources, and by the need for visible and symbolic action by senior administrators, involving sometimes unpopular actions, was critical. While the overall proportion of women recruited to the Organization (30 per cent) still fell far short of the 35 per cent target for posts subject to geographical distribution, a more eloquent statistic appeared in the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541, table G), indicating that of the 19 persons appointed to posts at the level P-5 and above in the year ending 30 June 1990, none had been women. He wished to know why the process of the advancement of women was not being monitored, why the trend had not been brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and why neither the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management nor the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had intervened to address that unacceptable situation. He was aware that the goal set by the General Assembly was established on the basis of posts subject to geographical distribution without reference to level, but the purpose and spirit of that goal were clear and remained unheeded.

20. The problem lay not, for the most part, in conscious discrimination, but in a failure to give sufficient priority to the unconscious attitudes, long-standing processes and hidden obstacles that made up what was termed structural or systemic discrimination. It could not, moreover, be assumed that women at the lower levels of the Secretariat would eventually rise to the top. Even if some did so, there remained barriers - sometimes referred to as the "glass ceiling" - which prevented women from rising to senior posts; in its evaluation, the Secretariat should identify such barriers and develop an action plan to remove them. Women were needed in senior posts not only as a matter of social justice, but also because they brought distinctive management styles with them, including open dialogue with employees, the sharing of information, an ability to listen and to build consensus and an emphasis on participation and teamwork.

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(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

21. The problem was not one to be dealt with solely by the Office of Human Resources Management; it was a problem for the Organization as a whole. Every supervisor must be held individually responsible for the promotion of equal employment opportunities for women; that responsibility should be taken into account in assessing their performance. Ultimately, it was to be hoped that supervisors who had made an outstanding contribution in that regard would be publicly commended and those who had failed in their duties privately rebuked.

22. The importance which Australia, Canada and New Zealand placed on the advancement of women was fully consistent with their emphasis on merit and work performance as the sole criteria for advancement in the Secretariat. They did not advocate quotas or preference schemes, but, rather, the removal of hidden biases in selection procedures and inequitable personnel conditions which prevented women from being judged on their merits. They were in favour of special measures, such as additional training, counselling, rotation through more demanding positions and the creation of "bridge" positions to compensate for past discrimination, but, at the point of selection, the merit principle should be applied. Given that there was no intrinsic reason why men and women should not perform equally well, targets must be set to measure results.

23. In conclusion, he summed up, in the following nine points, what Australia, Canada and New Zealand considered to be essential elements for future action: a reassertion of high-level commitment to the programme with an annual report on action taken; a comprehensive evaluation and analysis to identify barriers to the equal participation of women at all levels of the Secretariat and ways of overcoming them; endorsement of the 35 per cent target for the proportion of posts subject to geographical distribution to be held by women by 1995; endorsement of a 20 to 25 per cent sub-target for women at the D-1 level and above, with continued emphasis on the need for women from developing countries to be better represented at senior levels; the establishment of a comprehensive action programme to address systematically the discriminatory aspects of employment, with the rapid establishment of an interim programme pending full implementation of the work plans contained in document A/C.5/40/30; the establishment of a unit as part of the Secretary-General's Executive Office, with the sole task of monitoring the implementation of the plan; the institution of mechanisms for holding all supervisors accountable for their performance in that area; an appeal to Member States to help locate qualified women candidates, with the preparation of a list of actions that Member States might undertake and of a questionnaire to be sent to Member States half-way through the quinquennium to determine what actions they had taken; and the provision of adequate resources for the programme by reallocating existing priorities within personnel and training programmes. The action programme should set out, under various headings, the activity to be conducted, the deadline for completion, the resources to be allocated to it and the person responsible for its implementation.

AGENDA ITEM 117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/226, A/45/370 and A/45/617)

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

24. Mr. JOHANSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the analytical report of the Secretary-General (A/45/226) marked an important milestone in work on the reform process. Now that streamlining of procedures and efficiency had become underlying concerns in all the Organization's deliberations, the perception of its efficiency had been enhanced. The Nordic countries were, in general, satisfied with the results of the reform process so far and agreed that the time had come to consolidate them. However, the process itself must continue in order for its achievements to be maintained.

25. A consolidation of budgetary reforms did not mean that the regular budget had reached an appropriate permanent level. A zero real growth rate could not be an end itself. If new challenges appeared, the Organization must not be prevented from carrying out its tasks. Indeed, following the completion of the first full budgetary cycle since reforms were introduced, it was clear that the process remained in an experimental phase.

26. While the number of regular budget-funded posts had decreased by 1,365 as a result of recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (Group of 18), posts funded from extrabudgetary resources had increased by 637 since the beginning of the biennium 1988-1989. Such an increase could only partially be explained by the new demands placed on the Organization and illustrated the need for continued monitoring of extrabudgetary resources. In the context of post reductions, the Nordic countries were appreciative of the efforts made by the Secretariat during the often painful process of reform and streamlining. They hoped that the co-operative spirit marking relations between the Secretariat and Member States would continue. It was also worth recalling that, while much of the responsibility for better co-ordination, improved efficiency and the avoidance of duplication rested with the Secretariat, Member States, too, must take their share of the burden in implementing reforms.

27. A greater willingness to pursue reforms in the economic and social sectors, particularly with respect to the intergovernmental machinery, had been noted during recent informal discussions. The Nordic delegations looked forward to the relevant report of the Secretary-General, which they hoped would contain substantial proposals. They believed that conditions were now propitious for a debate on enhancing United Nations efficiency in the economic and social fields and hoped that such a debate would be pursued and broadened during the current session of the General Assembly.

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(Mr. Johansen, Norway)

28. The entire reform process remained heavily dependent on a rapid solution of the Organization's difficult financial situation. The Nordic States once again urged all Members of the Organization to pay their assessed contributions promptly and in full.

29. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) said that, although the Secretary-General's analytical report (A/45/226) was an improvement over previous reports on the subject, it did not analyse sufficiently how far the reform process had improved the functioning of the Organization and strengthened its capacities and means of action at a time of growing challenges. However, the report, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), would help the Committee to assess the results achieved and determine those fields in which more effort needed to be made.

30. Thanks to the joint efforts and determination of Member States and the Secretariat, the reform of the Organization had, in general, been successfully completed. However, the recommendations of the Group of 18 had been implemented in a very unbalanced manner, and he wondered whether that was attributable to practical difficulties, or to a particular order of priority, or to the absence of real political will.

31. The most decisive achievements of the reform process had been a profound restructuring of Secretariat services, substantial post reductions, and the establishment of a new budget procedure. The Secretary-General had succeeded in reducing the number of regular budget posts by 12 per cent and the General Assembly had agreed that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to go beyond that without jeopardizing the Organization's capacity to carry out its increased tasks. It would have been desirable to include an analysis of the effects of those reductions on the acquired rights and career prospects of staff, on respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution and on the implementation of the programmes and activities of the United Nations. In that connection, his delegation took note of the Secretary-General's assurance, in paragraph 81 of his report, that programmes that were part of the programme budget for the current biennium would not be negatively affected by the staff reductions.

32. The corner-stone of the reform process - the establishment of a new planning, programming and budgeting procedure - had been laid at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly; the joint efforts of Member States and the Secretariat had resulted in an unprecedented consensus on all the questions before the Fifth Committee, including the adoption of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. However, the uncertainties, questions and methodological problems that had emerged showed that the procedure was not perfect. The preliminary estimates and the level of growth of the programme budget had given rise to varying interpretations and approaches. The contingency fund for financing additional activities was still at an experimental stage. Moreover, although the search for consensus was desirable, it remained understood that only the relevant provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly could govern decision-making.

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(Mr. Laouari, Algeria)

33. There had been a number of improvements in regard to co-ordination. The joint meetings of CPC and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), and the annual report of ACC, were improving steadily. The efforts of Member States and the Secretariat should be directed towards making the best possible use of the existing mechanisms at the intergovernmental and inter-secretariat levels, as CPC recommended in paragraph 392 of its report (A/45/16 (Part I)).

34. Despite the acute developmental problems confronting many developing countries, the recommendations on the restructuring and revitalization of the intergovernmental system in the economic and social sectors had not been fully implemented. It was to be hoped that the improved political climate would help to build a consensus among Member States which would make it possible to provide the Organization with the structures and resources it needed for the effective discharge of its growing responsibilities in the priority area of economic and social development.

35. Personnel was another sensitive area in which resolution 41/213 had not been sufficiently implemented. Instead of increasing, the number of nationals of developing countries in senior posts had declined considerably as compared with 1986. Moreover, the recommendations calling for the strengthening of the capacity of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), greater transparency with regard to promotion and appointment, a career development plan for all staff, and the periodic renewal of the leadership of departments and offices had still not been put into effect.

36. The restructuring of the Department of Public Information (DPI) had been carried out without taking certain mandates into account. The representation of developing countries in DPI, particularly at the senior levels, had not improved and the resources of the United Nations Information Centres remained as restricted as ever. With regard to the project to build conference facilities for the Economic Commission for Africa, the Secretary-General should take steps to ensure that the delay in starting the work did not affect the timetable agreed on by the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

37. As to whether the reform process, despite its inadequacies, had helped to make the United Nations function more effectively, he said that, while the confidence of States in the Organization and the political will to make better use of its potential seemed to have been renewed, the objective of strengthening its capacities and means of action had not yet been achieved. The United Nations was still undergoing a serious financial crisis because of the refusal of some Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full. Its resources should be used to achieve common priority objectives. However, the selective financing of activities through the withholding of statutory contributions and the use of special trust funds, as well as the indirect effects of extrabudgetary funds, hampered and distorted the establishment of priorities. Moreover, the attempts to impose zero budget growth would not help the United Nations to carry out the mandates entrusted to it.

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38. The implementation of resolution 41/213 was a continuing process that demanded flexibility. Greater efforts should be made to repair the shortcomings that had been noted and to complete the implementation of those recommendations which had not yet been fully implemented. Since they were linked to external factors, the Organization's recent successes in the field of international peace and security alone did not prove that its functioning had been improved. In the end, the United Nations would be judged on its capacity to assume effectively its many responsibilities with regard to the economic and social development of the developing countries.

39. On the question of programme planning, he said that the establishment of a process of consultation between the Secretariat and Member States, as part of the new budget procedure, in the preparation of the Organization's next medium-term plan was a positive initiative that should be encouraged. The structure of the proposed plan was clear and simplified. Although it contained much useful information, however, the Secretary-General's introduction to the plan (A/45/6) did not define specific guidelines and priorities for future activities. As far as priorities were concerned, the major trends deriving from the mandates of the intergovernmental bodies should have been taken as a basis for the preparation of the document. In his delegation's view, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to establish their own State, the elimination of apartheid, the economic and social development of the developing countries, and the economic recovery of Africa, were guiding principles which should have been given more emphasis in the introduction. His delegation, however, welcomed the inclusion in the proposed plan of a separate programme for African economic recovery and development and the CPC proposal regarding the establishment of a system-wide plan of action for African development.

40. Mr. RAZVIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that a continuous and forward-looking process of administrative and budgetary reform was one means by which the United Nations could adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. The analytical report of the Secretary-General provided a detailed picture of progress made in that area. Overall, the results of efforts to implement the recommendations of the Group of 18 had been positive but modest, and reform should not be limited only to the areas covered by those recommendations.

41. The area in which least had been achieved was the rationalization of intergovernmental machinery, particularly in the social and economic fields. Neither had much headway been made in the restructuring of the Secretariat departments dealing with social and economic matters. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to follow up the initial accomplishments mentioned in his analytical report. It also urged him to ensure that the staff reductions envisaged under recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 were fully implemented, making use, inter alia, of the redeployment of staff among programmes. There was a need to develop a lean and efficient executive machinery adequate to the tasks facing the Organization; that implied the termination of obsolete programmes and the avoidance of duplication and parallelism.

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(Mr. Razvin, USSR)

42. Although some reforms had been achieved in the political area, the unprecedented growth of United Nations involvement in peace-making and peace-keeping operations and use of the good offices of the Secretary-General made it necessary to take a critical look at the existing structures of the departments concerned and to carry out a substantial and possibly radical overhaul.

43. The two initial objectives of the new budget procedure had been to create an effective mechanism by which to limit the Organization's expenses and, at the same time, to ensure that Member States played a decisive role in determining an acceptable level of spending at the earliest stage of the budgeting process. Following the completion of the first experimental budget cycle, his delegation was disappointed to observe that those objectives had not been achieved. The resumed session of CPC had apparently failed to give a clear answer to the crucial question as to whether the outline of the new budget provided for any real growth by comparison with the current one. The record so far inspired little optimism as to any substantial limitation of the Organization's expenditure. The question therefore merited serious consideration in the course of the Fifth Committee's deliberations.

44. It could not be denied, however, that there was a new atmosphere of trust and consensus in the Committee. The lessons learned from implementation of the new budget procedure should now be applied throughout the United Nations system. In that context, there was a need further to improve co-ordination in the United Nations system in order to avoid the overlapping of programmes. The frank discussion of that issue in the joint meetings held by CPC and ACC had indicated that there was a growing awareness of the need for such co-ordination in order to draw the maximum benefits from the system's existing material and intellectual resources. The discussion had seen a reaffirmation of the need to strengthen the role of the Secretary-General as Chairman of ACC, to enhance the central co-ordinating role of the General Assembly and to upgrade the importance of the annual overview reports of ACC, which, in the view of his delegation, should become a key instrument of co-ordination in the United Nations system. There was a need for specific measures in that regard, which could yield prompt and tangible results. A particular area which might be addressed immediately was that of the administrative and budgetary aspects of co-ordination, which should concentrate in particular on the activities of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), with a view to ensuring full implementation of the provisions of Article 17, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

45. The drastic changes in the international situation called for fresh and unorthodox approaches. Consideration might perhaps be given to some of the recent unconventional suggestions on ways of improving the Organization's effectiveness. What was needed was not just an ability to deal with present realities but a capacity to cope with situations which might arise in the future. The long and continuous process of reform was really only just beginning.

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46. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that the Secretary-General's analytical report (A/45/226) had been intended to provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of the way in which the reform process had enhanced the financial and administrative efficiency of the Organization. It had been hoped that it would show clearly which reforms had been fully implemented, which had been partially implemented and which had not been implemented at all, and in the latter two cases the reasons why. In his delegation's view, the report failed to bring out the full impact, negative or positive, and provided no clear reasons for the partial implementation of certain recommendations or the failure to implement others. Detailed explanations from programme managers would have helped the Fifth Committee to hold an informed discussion that would have paved the way for appropriate remedial action.

47. With regard to the impact of the implementation of the recommendations on conference-servicing, he reaffirmed the views put forward by his delegation during the consideration of the item on pattern of conferences. The current session of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental meetings continued to be hampered by the delays in the issuance of documents. He doubted whether the Department of Conference Services (DCS) was any more efficient than when resolution 41/213 had been adopted. He sympathized with the Department's predicament and recognized that many of the factors that had brought about that unfortunate situation were beyond its control. Member States and the Secretariat shared the responsibility, but that did not mean that the Committee should shy away from assessing the impact of resolution 41/213 on DCS.

48. His delegation welcomed the enhanced role assigned to the Committee on Conferences under resolution 43/222 B. The Committee had carried out its mandate successfully, but it should be careful not to stray into budgetary matters. However, that positive development had been frustrated, in particular, by the late issuance of documents, which had impaired the ability of various deliberative bodies to conduct meetings efficiently. A number of intergovernmental bodies were no longer provided with summary records; that made it increasingly difficult for them to refer to previous discussions and to ascertain what had led to the conclusions reached. The biennialization of meetings or agenda items had become a common feature and, while it might be necessary because of the financial crisis, his delegation could not accept the notion that the curtailment of documentation and the discontinuance of summary records made the conduct of business more efficient. The Committee on Conferences should keep those matters under continuous review in the light of the financial situation and should, as appropriate, formally recommend measures to repair that unfortunate situation.

49. His delegation recognized the delicate nature of the issue of the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and its intricate links with the restructuring of the economic and social sectors. It endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in paragraph 19 (d) of the CPC report (A/45/16 (Part I)) and in General Assembly resolutions 42/211, paragraph 7, and 43/213, paragraph 3. Those measures proposed by the Secretary-General that had administrative and budgetary or programme implications should, of course, first be reviewed by CPC and ACABQ, in accordance with their mandates.

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(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

50. With regard to co-ordination, his delegation welcomed the new spirit of dialogue among Member States and between Member States and the various secretariats of the United Nations system. It had been generally encouraged by the discussions on co-ordination at the most recent session of CPC and at the joint meetings between CPC and ACC. The dialogue should continue, with a view to identifying further obstacles to enhanced co-ordination and proposing measures to overcome them within the framework of the approved legislative mandates of various intergovernmental bodies. It was, however, important that the joint meetings should not be used to address issues and press for new mandates that should normally be the province of intergovernmental bodies. They should be a forum for a frank exchange of views in which organizations and agencies should be encouraged to participate freely. That would not be possible if the meetings were perceived solely as an occasion for criticism.

51. The implementation of the recommendation on post reductions remained a major issue. He noted that, although the Secretary-General stated, in paragraph 80 of his analytical report, that a negative impact on mandated programmes had, on the whole, been avoided, he also stated that the full effect would be felt in future. It was reasonable to conclude that neither Member States nor the Secretariat could assess precisely the full impact of the reform process. It was already very clear, however, that it had adversely affected the representation of developing countries. As paragraph 185 of the report clearly showed, the representation of developing countries at senior levels of the Secretariat had been reduced, and he noted that, in each senior category, the representation of developed countries had increased by a corresponding percentage. In resolution 44/200 A, the General Assembly had accepted the Secretary-General's view that it was not possible to propose further post reductions without an adverse impact on mandated programmes, a view that was reiterated in paragraph 82 of his analytical report. However, the Secretary-General seemed to be receiving conflicting signals regarding further post reductions and the creation of new high-level posts. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the mixed signals came from the quarters pressing hardest for post reductions. The only conclusion was that those countries wished the reductions to be carried out at the expense of the developing countries.

52. His delegation remained firm on the need to improve the structure and geographical composition of the Secretariat, a view shared by a large majority of delegations. He welcomed the reference by the representative of Australia, during the debate on agenda item 126 (a), to the undesirability of regarding high-level posts as the exclusive preserve of particular countries. When his own delegation had raised the matter in CPC, the picture that had emerged, of vacated posts being filled by persons from the same country as before, had not been encouraging.

53. He reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to the planning, programming and budgeting process adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 41/213 and welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to involve Member States in the formulation of the medium-term plan and the programme budget through the process of consultation. It also agreed with the Secretary-General's view, in paragraph 235 of his report, that the obstacles to be overcome were extremely severe. Even at the level of the Main

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

Committees of the General Assembly, there was little or no substantive discussion in order to evolve a common response to various chapters of the medium-term plan, or even to understand the import of statements of programme budget implications to be sent to the Fifth Committee for decision. As far as the medium-term plan was concerned, delegations were simply requested to submit written comments to the Committee Chairman and, without any further discussion, a compendium of views was prepared and submitted to the Fifth Committee with no clear recommendation from the Committee concerned. The Fifth Committee should make its requests to the other Committees more explicit, and the Secretariat should review the format and content of statements of programme budget implications in order to facilitate their consideration. His delegation concurred in the views expressed by ACABQ in that connection.

54. Commenting on the decision-making process, he said that, when the reforms had first been discussed, some Member States had been apprehensive about the voting procedure in budgetary matters and had even suggested that a weighted voting system should be introduced. The General Assembly had moved expeditiously to adopt resolution 41/213, which reaffirmed the provisions of the Charter, but the impression seemed to linger that that resolution had amended the rules of procedure by introducing consensus as a way of making decisions on budgetary matters. That misrepresented both its letter and its spirit. His delegation was prepared to discuss the possible amendment of the General Assembly's rules of procedure and even of the Charter, but only as part of a broader package that would entail, among other things, a review of the privileges enjoyed by some Member States in the Security Council. Consensus was desirable but, rather than being an objective, it constituted a means of achieving the widest possible agreement during negotiations. His delegation had always worked to achieve consensus and had welcomed the adoption of the programme budget for 1990/1991 by consensus. Nevertheless, that decision did not derogate from the decision-making procedure outlined in the Charter and reaffirmed in resolution 41/213.

55. The United Nations had been preoccupied by reform and restructuring ever since 1986. As his delegation had stated at the thirtieth session of CPC, changes might be necessary. However, the Organization must spend more time focusing on the priority problems that faced the international community. The United Nations could not be efficient if it spent most of its time discussing itself and how it could improve, rather than the programmes it was supposed to implement.

56. Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the format of the proposed medium-term plan had been improved, streamlined and simplified. His delegation was pleased to note the wide-ranging and comprehensive involvement of Member States and specialized intergovernmental bodies in its preparation. However, it wished to emphasize the importance of developing a common language that would make their involvement more meaningful, and it agreed with ACABQ that in future the document containing the consolidated summary of their comments and recommendations should be improved, in both form and content. It also concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendations to the effect that the plan should indicate the estimated human and financial resource requirements for the major programmes.

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(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

57. With respect to the objectives outlined in the introduction to the medium-term plan (A/45/6), he wished to emphasize that international security was closely linked to development. Economic development and social progress should therefore be given one of the highest priorities in the medium-term plan. Various programmes had been adopted within the framework of the United Nations that would provide a sound basis for the development of the least developed countries. The United Nations should be prepared to implement those programmes in a comprehensive and integrated way. It was also vital for the medium-term plan to have enough built-in flexibility to incorporate new programmes, if the need arose. Finally, as the representative of a country which had had more than its share of natural disasters, he wished to emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Organization and its agencies in the field of emergency assistance and humanitarian relief.

58. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that the medium-term plan should highlight three priorities: international peace and security, economic and social development and the environment. Those three priorities were vital to collective security, which was best achieved by resolving economic, social or ecological problems before they led to instability.

59. He was disappointed that the introduction to the proposed medium-term plan (A/45/6) did not specifically mention the need for multilateral action on the questions of Palestine and apartheid, which continued to pose a threat to the establishment and maintenance of peace. Apart from that shortcoming, the introduction presented a balanced picture of the objectives and strategies of the Organization for the period covered by the plan. He was encouraged by its reference to the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries (General Assembly resolution S-18/3) (para. 18). The United Nations had a particular responsibility to assist in resolving the debt crisis, which, as stated in paragraph 22, threatened not only the economic and social but also the political stability of many countries. His delegation was encouraged, too, by the discussion of environmental problems, although some mention should have been made of the close relationship between environmental protection and economic development, which had been stressed in General Assembly resolution 44/228. Lastly, with respect to human rights, it was important to remember that the improvement of living conditions and respect for the freedoms of opinion and speech were two sides of the same coin.

60. As the principal guideline for the general policies of the United Nations, the medium-term plan should be drawn up according to the rules and regulations governing programme planning and evaluation. While he did not wish to see the plan stripped to the bare bones, additional streamlining was still necessary, and the recommendation contained in paragraph 13 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/45/617) merited careful study. He also shared the opinion of CPC that the objectives of many subprogrammes should be stated with greater clarity and precision in order to facilitate their evaluation (A/45/16 (Part I), para. 30). With respect to the evaluation process, the distinction between the objectives of States and those of the Secretariat should be more explicit. Also, a clear

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(Mr. Belhaj, Tunisia)

distinction should be made between the role of States and that of the Secretariat, particularly with regard to self-evaluation.

61. In such uncertain times, priorities could change rapidly. A mechanism was needed that would make it possible to revise the medium-term plan after it had gone into operation. As was evident from the Secretary-General's report on all aspects of priority-setting in future outlines of the proposed programme budget (A/44/272), determining priorities was itself a problem. Referring to paragraph 42 of the report, he wondered how it would be decided whether or not multilateral action was important to the achievement of a given objective. When delegations asked to have an item included in the agenda of the General Assembly, they did so because they thought that the issue was best dealt with in a multilateral context. Making the importance of multilateral action a criterion in priority-setting decisions could lead to endless debates on the inclusion of an item. A new, in-depth report from the Secretariat on the problem of priority-setting would therefore be appreciated. In the opinion of his delegation, priorities needed to be established not only for all the major programmes but for the programmes and subprogrammes as well.

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme I. Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization (continued)

62. Mr. TENNEY (Israel) said that the inclusion in the proposed medium-term plan of programme 5 on the question of Palestine was deplorable. That programme was tantamount to financing the activities of the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose objective was to establish a Palestinian State on the ruins of Israel. Such a goal was contrary to the ideals of the United Nations, one of which was to maintain international peace and security. As an example of the activities to be funded by the programme, he cited various United Nations press releases, which he termed anti-Semitic and defamatory. United Nations funds would be better used to strengthen the Camp David agreements or to assist the United Nations Development Programme or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in their activities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. While his delegation supported the proposed medium-term plan in general, it was strongly opposed to any financing and support of programme 5.

63. Mr. AL-KHALADI (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Israeli representative's political lecture was out of place. As the representative of the country responsible for denying the Palestinian people their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination, he was singularly unconvincing. Programme 5 was simple and unpretentious. The Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, redesignated the Division for Palestinian Rights, had been established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B. A small operation within the Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, it was charged with the innocent task of disseminating information on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the efforts of the United Nations to promote those rights. It needed strengthening, not criticism.

64. Mr. AL-ROMAIHI (Bahrain), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation fully supported programme 5, to which it attached particular importance. It stood firmly behind the efforts of the United Nations to reach a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine and to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to national independence and sovereignty.

65. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, since the task at hand was a programming exercise, not a political analysis, the issue was whether or not there was a mandate for programme 5, and there unquestionably was. In the opinion of his delegation, the programme should be given high priority because, contrary to the Israeli representative's allegation, it would strengthen international peace and security.

66. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, agreed with the representative of Uganda. The many General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine provided a mandate for programme 5, which had the full support of his delegation.

67. With respect to programme 1, document A/45/6 (Prog.1) was imprecise in its use of terminology. In particular, it used the term peace-making, for which there was no clear definition. He would like the Secretariat to submit a file containing the specific resolutions of the General Assembly in which that term was defined. There were other examples of a lack of precision. For example, paragraph 1.10 (a) stated that the Secretary-General would make his good offices available or provide "other forms of intercession". He would like an explanation of that phrase. Also, the document repeatedly referred to "conflicts" without qualifying them as "international", thereby implying that the United Nations might intervene in domestic conflicts.

68. Returning to the ambiguous topic of peace-making, he questioned the establishment of a trust fund for peace-making activities. The Advisory Committee stated that extrabudgetary resources could be used for only two types of expenditures: technical co-operation to assist developing countries and existing programmes. While it was hard to be sure, he did not think that peace-making activities fell into either of those categories.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Friday, 2 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MAYCOCK	(Barbados)
later:	Ms. MUSTONEN (Vice-Chairman)	(Finland)
later:	Mr. MAYCOCK (Chairman)	(Barbados)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Major programme I: Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization (continued)

Major programme II: Implementation, codification and progressive development of international law

Major programme III: International co-operation for economic and social development

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Revised estimates under sections 3, 13, 27 and 31, and income section 1 (continued)

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13 November 1990

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/226, A/45/370 and A/45/617)

1. Mr. ALI KHAN (Pakistan) said that his delegation concurred in the Secretary-General's assessment in his analytical report (A/45/226) that the United Nations had, to the best of its abilities, carried out the reforms mandated by the General Assembly. The purpose of the reform process should be to strengthen the Organization's ability to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter and the challenges currently facing the world. The United Nations must remain a dynamic organization. Reform was not a finite process, nor an end in itself but implied a constant review of the functioning of the United Nations in relation to its objectives. As to the Organization's capacity to attain those objectives, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that no organization could sustain a prolonged period of upheaval.

2. The difficulties of carrying out the reforms had been aggravated by continuing financial uncertainty. It should be borne in mind that an implicit objective of resolution 41/213 had been to restore the Organization's financial viability. Until that was achieved, the reforms could not be said to have been successful. Unfortunately, some of those delegations which continued to press for the full implementation of particular recommendations had yet to meet their financial obligations in full. At a time when so much was expected of the United Nations, his delegation earnestly hoped that that situation would soon be corrected.

3. His delegation had other misgivings about the manner in which resolution 41/213 had been implemented. A reform process aimed at enhancing the Organization's preformance had instead become a budget-cutting exercise which had undermined staff morale and adversely affected programme delivery. In the case of recommendation 3, for example, both the number of agenda items and of resolutions adopted had increased since the forty-first session of the General Assembly. As far as the rational distribution of agenda items among Main Committees was concerned, another Main Committee was also considering an issue relating to personnel. As to restraint in requesting reports, a proposal for a new report had actually been made during the consideration of the current item.

4. The wisdom of some of the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had been called into question by ACC (recommendation 13) and ICSC (recommendations 53 and 61). Recommendation 24 had been that UNDP should consider the feasibility of taking over the functions of UNDRO, yet, by its resolution 41/201, the General Assembly had reaffirmed UNDRO's mandate. Recommendations 25, 26 and 33 had also not been found practicable. It was not clear how placing the functions of planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring in a single organizational unit, in response to recommendation 32, had benefited activities in the economic and social sectors. In that context, he recalled that

(Mr. Ali Khan, Pakistan)

many Member States had repeatedly stressed the importance of keeping substantive considerations in view when carrying out any restructuring exercise. The benefits if any, of the changes introduced, should be demonstrated by the Secretariat through a comparative analysis of the new and former procedures.

5. The General Assembly had made clear its position that the reform should not result in any negative impact on programmes. The Secretary-General had indicated that a negative impact on mandated programmes had been avoided, primarily because post reductions had fallen short of the mandated 15 per cent level at 11.95 per cent. The Secretary-General stated, in paragraph 81 of his analytical report, that programmes included in the current budget would not be negatively affected at that level of post reductions.

6. While 1,365 posts had been eliminated from the programme budget for the current biennium provision had been made for 2,549 posts to be funded from extrabudgetary resources. He wondered whether that figure should be interpreted as reflecting a 22 per cent increase in the number of posts actually required by the Organization to carry out its mandated activities. Reflecting its concern over that trend, CPC had called for further analysis of the relationship between posts and programmes funded from the regular budget and those funded from extrabudgetary resources. In paragraph 258 of his report the Secretary-General stated that the reforms had been carried out without serious negative effects on programmes. However, the suggestion that there had, in fact, been a negative impact was borne out by the programme performance report for 1988-1989, showing a decline in overall delivery rates from 82 per cent in 1984-1985 to 76 per cent in 1986-1987 and 74 per cent in 1988-1989. The fact that the post reductions had been effected arbitrarily, without regard to work-load analyses, might have contributed to that decline.

7. There was no analysis in the report of the effect of post reductions on equitable geographical distribution. Despite recommendation 47, the representation at senior levels of nationals from developing countries had declined during the biennium 1988-1989. The Secretary-General should be urged to redouble his efforts to correct that situation. Information on any changes that might have resulted from the implementation of recommendation 55 would be helpful.

8. Regarding reforms in the economic and social sectors, his delegation had taken note of the efforts to revitalize the Economic and Social Council, as reflected in its resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114. The work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields was of special importance and his delegation looked forward to the Assembly's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on restructuring in those sectors, to be considered in the plenary Assembly under agenda item 121. Although that report would address the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors, there were other areas of direct concern to the Fifth Committee, in particular the implementation of recommendation 32.

(Mr. Ali Khan, Pakistan)

9. While the introduction of a budget outline had enabled Member States to participate in the formulation of the budget at an earlier stage, it had not proved a reliable indicator of the level of resources required for the next biennium. Whether the Contingency Fund could operate effectively, given the demand for new programmes, remained to be seen. The new budgetary procedure was still in the process of evolving and must be kept under review. His delegation recognized that the new procedures had in 1989 enabled the General Assembly for the first time, to adopt the programme budget by consensus. Nevertheless, he emphasized that those procedures did not preclude any Member from calling for a vote, in accordance with the understanding on which resolution 41/213 had been adopted.

10. The question of extrabudgetary resources remained a grey area. His delegation fully concurred in the view of ACABQ that those resources could have an impact not only on the work programme but on the ordering of priorities and that it was essential to define the role of extrabudgetary financing in the Organization's overall financial structure.

11. The restoration of the Organization's financial viability was increasingly important. Since 1986, the United Nations had assumed vast responsibilities for solving new problems of global significance. The Organization needed staff of the highest calibre and in sufficient numbers to carry out its new activities and the necessary financing had to be provided on a sound and assured basis. It was, therefore, unrealistic to insist that budgetary levels should remain unchanged.

12. Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

13. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the relaxation of tensions among major Powers had resulted in a more effective use of the United Nations, thus helping to revive the confidence of Member States in the Organization's ability to resolve international conflicts and global problems. In response to rising expectations, however, the United Nations now had to shoulder greater responsibilities. In the field of peace-keeping and peace-making, in particular, its activities had grown dramatically to a total of 11 missions in the field at the end of 1989, compared with 5 at the beginning of 1988.

14. The Organization had managed its increased work-load well, thereby enhancing its image. That improved performance, however, had been accompanied by an increase in its financial requirements which Member States had to meet. He noted that missions in the field had been provided with extensive human and financial resources and had recorded sizeable unencumbered budgetary balances at the end of their mandate. While his delegation recognized the difficulties of organizing peace-keeping operations, which were in large part "unprogrammable", it attached importance to the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of every programme and activity carried out by the Organization. It therefore attached great importance to the Secretary-General's commitment to maintaining administrative and financial effectiveness and efficiency. While cost-effectiveness and increased efficiency were not ends in themselves, they were essential means of strengthening the United Nations.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

15. The Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had noted that over the years the increase in the number of posts had not been matched by an increase in the management capacity of the United Nations to maintain overall administrative efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness. That had been the fundamental problem to be resolved through the administrative reform envisaged in General Assembly resolution 41/213. Better management and redeployment were expected to create conditions whereby any increase in resources would result in greater output. The process had obviously heightened the consciousness of Member States and the Secretariat about the way in which the United Nations used its resources.

16. One of the major achievements of the reform was the new planning, programming and budgeting process. That process would help to ensure that priority-setting and the establishment of resource requirements in the medium-term plan and programme budget would result in the elimination of obsolete, marginally useful or ineffective activities. Implementation of the programme budget within the overall level of resources agreed upon would encourage the effective utilization and, eventually, the redeployment of available resources in accordance with priorities. Not only must there be a continued effort to adopt decisions on budgetary matters by genuine consensus, but much also remained to be done to consolidate the new budgetary process. A comprehensive solution must be found to the problem of additional expenditures, including those deriving from inflation, currency fluctuations and other add-ons not chargeable to the Contingency Fund. It was necessary to examine, in the light of past budget performance, the extent to which resources could be redeployed from low- to high-priority areas before the adequacy of the Contingency Fund was reviewed in 1991. The surplus indicated in the performance report for the biennium 1988-1989 was much larger than the $15 million Contingency Fund, which amounted to 0.75 per cent of total budget appropriation. For the biennium, there had been an uncommitted balance of $23.6 million, or 1.3 per cent of the total amount appropriated, and unliquidated obligations of $63.9 million, representing 3.7 per cent of actual expenditures for the biennium 1988-1989. When resources of that order were available, there was no basis for the fear that the new budgetary process might jeopardize the Organization's ability to fulfil its changing role and mandate.

17. The staff reductions effected so far had had no negative impact on mandated programmes. The United Nations should continue to work to control any unnecessary expansion of its functions and budget, taking into account the staff reductions mandated by resolution 41/213. A positive indication of such restraint had been the reduction by nearly 50 per cent of the number of programme outputs added through legislative decision or at the initiative of the Secretariat over the past four years. The Secretary-General should also continue his efforts to reduce the number of high-level posts, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/201.

18. The Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts had recommended that there should be further post reductions following the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat after the completion of the initial three-year period. In that connection, his delegation had three suggestions: first, a rational work-load standard should be established to prevent the impact of

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(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

reductions from varying from department to department; second, the number of junior Professional staff should be increased and there should be recruitment from outside to ensure that not just the numbers of staff but also the staffing structure would be changed; third, there should be more transparency and coherence in personnel management, which should be based on objective methods and clear criteria for recruitment, evaluation and promotion. Serious attention should be paid to improving the quality of the staff, which was the Organization's most important asset.

19. Delays in restructuring the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors had endangered major achievements in other areas, and reform in that area was long overdue. Functions must be revitalized so that it would be possible to respond better to the requirements of developing countries. His delegation welcomed the level of agreement reached in such organs as UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Europe with regard to streamlining structures, reducing documentation and the number of meetings, and improving the organization of work by shortening agendas and streamlining calendars. It was also gratifying that four important United Nations bodies had decided on biennialization. Vigorous efforts to those ends should be made by all intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. The Secretary-General should take the initiative in rationalizing the intergovernmental machinery necessary for each of the forthcoming major international conferences and meetings on such priority issues as the environment, the least developed countries, international debt and drugs, rather than awaiting the results of deliberations in those forums. The role of the Committee on Conferences should also be strengthened to help it to contribute to a better utilization of conference facilities and resources, not only of the United Nations but of the entire United Nations system. The Committee should also enforce strict observance of the established rules on the control and distribution of documentation and improve conference servicing by making use of recent technological innovations.

20. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). The United Nations system was expected to play a major role in multilateral co-operation aimed at solving problems that were increasingly multidisciplinary and global in scope. It was essential, therefore, for the United Nations and the specialized agencies to develop a truly integrated approach to those problems. With enhanced co-ordination within the system, it would be possible to make better use of scarce resources and avoid waste and duplication. For that reason, his delegation believed that the time had come for CPC to consolidate and evaluate its own performance and establish a work programme designed to enhance and strengthen co-ordination within the United Nations system on the basis of input from ACC, particularly the prospective annual overview report. Under the direction of the General Assembly, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) was responsible for the process of reforming the United Nations and for system-wide co-ordination. If it took the steps suggested, it would contribute substantially to promoting the reform and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness both of the United Nations and the system as a whole.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279, and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

21. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the proposed medium-term plan for 1992-1997 had particular significance, not only because it would constitute the basis for the programme budgets of the Organization for the next six years but because it was the first comprehensive blueprint for a post-reform United Nations. His delegation shared the view that the medium-term plan helped to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of mandated activities and was gratified that the Secretary-General had indicated in his introduction to the plan that he agreed.

22. His delegation also agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the time had come to address the issue of whether the medium-term plan, in its current form, fulfilled the criteria set out in the relevant regulations and rules governing programme planning. There were some notable improvements in the structure and planning process of the proposed plan: a new programme structure had been adopted, the number of programmes had been reduced through consolidation of related activities, and priorities had been established for most of the subprogrammes. Nevertheless, much remained to be done if the medium-term plan was to be of real use to Member States and the Secretariat. His delegation had consistently stressed that the medium-term plan should be at once a strategic and a pragmatic instrument for guiding the work of the United Nations and that it should be concise but bold and action-oriented. In view of the bulky documentation issued in connection with the plan, he supported the Advisory Committee's observation that the plan must be simplified and shortened if it was to be of use. Consideration should be given to establishing, from the very beginning of the planning process, clear guidelines for the format of the plan, so as to reduce its length and avoid rhetorical excess.

23. The original concept of the plan had been that it should be directly relevant to the programme budgets. However, the extent to which the plan served as the framework for the formulation of those budgets was unclear. There was a need for a fundamental review both of the medium-term plan, in terms of its planning process, format and goals, and of the budgeting process.

24. His delegation attached the highest importance to the introduction to the plan, which highlighted the goals and objectives, priorities and means that would be available under it. His delegation recognized that the format of the introduction to the proposed plan represented a marked improvement, and set clear-cut priorities. It was obvious that the Secretary-General had taken into account the concerns expressed by Member States at the preparatory stage. His delegation appreciated the statement of the Secretary-General according the peace-making and peace-keeping activities of the Organization the highest priority, and was also pleased that consideration had been given to addressing inter-sectoral priorities.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

25. His delegation wished to make two requests that it felt would help refine the proposed priorities. Firstly, it would like to request an assessment of what such priority-setting implied for the entire medium-term plan. Designating peace-making and peace-keeping activities as a policy priority might entail careful identification of those issues in the economic and social sectors that were closely linked to issues of peace and security. For example, it would be wrong to lose sight of assistance to rehabilitation and settlement programmes, and the United Nations should also promote co-operation after the resolution of a conflict so that the land and economy of a country ravaged by war might be restored. A broader range of efforts to advance co-operation for peace, encompassing political, economic and social sectors, would need to be further elaborated. The second request concerned the degree of specificity of the priorities designated. It should be possible to translate priorities into specific strategies and time-limited objectives the attainment of which would be verifiable. It was obvious also that, unless an estimate of the resources needed was included, the entire exercise of priority-setting became meaningless.

26. In view of the extrabudgetary nature of resources allocated to peace-keeping activities, the proposed priorities should be translated into allocations of both regular and extrabudgetary resources. To that end, it would be useful if the Secretariat provided States on a continuous basis with analytical information on the allocation of resources among programmes of the medium-term plan, in order to facilitate the monitoring of trends in priority-setting. Such information should indicate distribution of financial and staff resources, both regular and extrabudgetary, among the programmes defined in the plan, and should be submitted biennially to CPC in order to assist the Committee in its task of evaluating progress and updating the plan.

27. Programme implementation, and in particular the monitoring of output delivery, was one of the important stages of the programme cycle. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that evaluation had still not been completely accepted as a management tool, and systematically and routinely integrated into the decision-making and management process.

28. His delegation also took the question of programme performance very seriously and endorsed the Advisory Committee's view that reports such as those contained in the Secretary-General's report on the programme performance for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/45/218 and Add.1) were of little value. That was true even from the quantitative point of view to which the report confined itself, since the report treated as identical outputs that were very different in terms of quality, importance and the resources entailed. The overall programme delivery rate arrived at on the basis of so inaccurate an assumption was more than misleading, it was harmful, since many delegations had cited that delivery rate in past bienniums as evidence that the programme performance of the Organization was deteriorating. In that connection, his delegation regarded as quite reasonable the view of the Advisory Committee that the submission of further programme performance reports should be suspended pending the resolution of the underlying methodological difficulties.

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Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme I: Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization (continued)

29. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the title of major programme I should be changed. The ultimate goal of all the programmes of the United Nations was the maintenance of international peace and security; as it stood, however, the title of major programme I gave the impression that other United Nations activities were not for that purpose. His delegation also felt that the title of programme 1 under major programme I brought together activities which were very different in nature, and that, in the case of "good offices", the activities referred to overlapped with those of programme 2, "Political and Security Council affairs". He would therefore suggest that the title of programme 1 should be changed to "Peaceful resolution of disputes" and that programmes 2 and 3 should be merged and given the new title of "Collective measures for the preservation of peace". The title of the fourth subprogramme might then be changed to reflect the fact that it covered programmes for the adjustment of international situations, including economic situations, which might lead to breaches of the peace.

30. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) noted that CPC had recommended approval of programme 1 on the understanding that further clarification of the concept of peace-making would be provided by the Secretary-General at the current session of the General Assembly. However, after reading the note submitted by the Secretariat in that context (A/C.5/45/CRP.1), his delegation had come to the preliminary conclusion that the concept of peace-making remained vague. It might be inferred from paragraph 3 of the Secretariat's note that good offices and peace-making were the same thing, but the references in later paragraphs to intra-State conflicts or tensions and to the preparation and holding of free and fair elections gave the impression that peace-making involved more than good offices. His delegation understood that the development of events had led the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to extend the meaning of what had so far been understood as good offices and peace-making, and it did not question what the Secretary-General had done so far in that respect. It felt, however, that, for the future, it would be well to have greater clarity and precision with regard to the definition of those activities.

31. His delegation felt that the question was an important and difficult one, and it considered that the treatment of it by CPC in paragraph 81 of its report reflected an extremely delicate balance. As the representative of Ghana had suggested, a serious problem of definition was involved. Until such time as the competent substantive bodies took a position on the question, the reference to peace-making should be excluded from the title of programme 1.

32. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that programme 1 was very important inasmuch as it involved activities which were basic for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although the Security Council was the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Secretary-General had also been given an important role to play in that respect under the Charter. His delegation fully supported the programme, but would suggest that its title be

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(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

changed slightly to read "Good offices, maintenance and restoration of international peace and security, and research and the collection of information". The maintenance and restoration of international peace and security were frequently referred to in the Charter as associated activities, for example in Articles 39 and 51; it therefore seemed justified to link the two activities in the title of programme 1. His delegation also agreed that research and the collection of information were essential in supporting the Secretary-General's efforts in the field of preventive diplomacy and negotiation, and should therefore be included as part of programme 1, provided that duplication with other information activities was avoided.

33. Turning to programme 5, he emphasized the Organization's responsibility with regard to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need to give absolute priority to ensuring the implementation of the mandates conferred by the General Assembly in that field.

34. With regard to programme 7, it was important to take advantage of the improvement in the international climate to strengthen the existing mechanisms within the United Nations for the promotion of general and complete disarmament. Drawing attention to paragraph 7.1 of document A/45/6 (Prog. 7), he said that Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations was not the only legislative authority for the programme; other provisions could have been mentioned, including Article 11, Article 27 and, in connection with the proposed revitalization of the Military Staff Committee, Article 47.

35. With regard to paragraph 7.5, he felt that the question of weapons production and the proliferation of nuclear weapons should have been mentioned in connection with arms transfers.

36. He supported the fellowship programme designed to provide assistance to developing countries, as mentioned in paragraph 7.17, and felt that priority should be given to subprogramme 4.

37. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said that in the implementation of major programme I, the Secretary-General must ensure a balance between the analytical and research elements and the operational aspects of the programme. Emphasis should be given to subprogramme 3 of programme 1, which was an appropriate tool for providing guidance.

38. He drew attention to paragraph 108 of the report of CPC (A/45/16 (Part I)), which highlighted the importance of programme 6.

39. CPC had recommended that the concept of peace-making should be clarified prior to the adoption of programme 1. Drawing attention to document A/C.5/45/CRP.1, he emphasized that, as stated in paragraph 7, a mandate from the Security Council or the General Assembly and the concurrence of the parties involved were indispensable. He also drew attention to paragraph 2, which stated that the Secretary-General's mandate for good offices and peace-making derived from various

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(Mr. Tommo Monthe, Cameroon)

Security Council and General Assembly resolutions; those instruments should be specified.

40. With regard to the question of resources, it would be important in the future for delegations to have before them an indication of the resources provided for the implementation of major programmes. The negative impact of the provision of extrabudgetary resources must be borne in mind. If the Secretary-General had acted in accordance with regulation 3.8 and regulation 3.18 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, there would have been a discussion within CPC of the alternative resources proposed by the Secretary-General for the implementation of the programmes.

41. Lastly, he concurred with the priorities accorded by CPC to the various subprogrammes.

42. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked whether it would be appropriate for the Fifth Committee to change the titles of major programmes, as had been proposed, and whether doing so would have any bearing on the titles of subprogrammes or on the reallocation of resources.

43. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, with regard to the questions raised by the representatives of Cuba and Venezuela, a representative of the Secretariat would comment on the concept of peace-making at a later meeting.

44. With regard to the question raised by the representative of the Philippines, the Committee had a sovereign right to change the title of any programme, and doing so would not affect the reallocation of resources as no figures had been submitted.

45. Replying to the representative of Ghana, he said that programmes 1 to 4 had not been submitted to any subsidiary organs for review because there were no such organs which were competent; the Main Committees of the General Assembly, to which the representative of Venezuela had referred, were not subsidiary organs. With regard to the suggestion made by the representative of Ghana that programmes 1 and 2 could be merged, the Secretariat had endeavoured to have the proposed medium-term plan reflect the centres of responsibility of the major Secretariat structures, taking into account the changes which had occurred.

46. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that, while he appreciated the assurances given by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division that another representative of the Secretariat would address the Committee with regard to the matter which he had raised, he emphasized that he had not raised a question, but rather had insisted that the legislative mandates corresponding to the concept of peace-making operations should be specified for the Committee.

47. With regard to the procedures for discussion of the proposed medium-term plan, he asked whether the other Main Committees had been requested to include such an item in their agendas.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that he had written to the Chairmen of the other Main Committees to invite them to consider the item.

49. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the plan was the result of a long and complicated consultative process. The representative of Cuba had correctly pointed out that consideration of the plan was not a formal item on the agenda of the other Main Committees. The Fifth Committee had primary responsibility for presenting the medium-term plan to the plenary Assembly; it had never been the intention to generate a full debate on the item in the other Committees. While there was currently no ground for making consideration of the plan a formal item on the agendas of the other Committees, their Chairmen were free to present comments on the various programmes, and the Fifth Committee would not take a final decision until those comments had been received.

50. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that he was concerned at the lack of precision with regard to the activities encompassed by programmes 1 to 4. With regard to programme 1, for example, the activities involved were those undertaken by the Secretary-General to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and other actions undertaken by the Security Council. Therefore, the term "peace enforcement measures" would be preferable to "good offices". Similarly, with regard to programmes 3 and 4, it was necessary to specify the legislative mandates from which they derived and the activities which would qualify them as programmes, rather than referring, for example, to "special political questions". CPC had had an opportunity to examine those questions, but not all delegations were members of CPC.

51. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) emphasized that the Fifth Committee had primary responsibility for considering and stating its views on the proposed medium-term plan.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that on 11 October 1990 he had addressed a letter to the President of the General Assembly. The Chairmen of the other Main Committees had then been requested to submit replies on behalf of their Committees by 9 November 1990.

53. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the procedure was not very complicated. The Chairman of the Fifth Committee had merely to write to the Chairmen of the other Committees in order to draw their attention to the proposed medium-term plan. In the past, replies had always been received by a certain date, and frequently the other Committees had indicated that they had no comments to make with regard to the various programmes. The draft resolution submitted by the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly always included a statement to the effect that the views of other Committees had been taken into account. Accordingly, the juridical basis for other Committees to present their views existed, and it was the responsibility of those Committees to decide whether or not they wished to avail themselves of the opportunity to comment on the sections of the medium-term plan which fell within their spheres of competence.

Major programme II: Implementation, codification and progressive development of international law

54. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) drew attention to paragraphs 127 to 139 of document A/45/16 (Part I). CPC had recommended approval of programme 9 with a number of modifications, as set out in paragraph 132. CPC had also recommended approval of programme 10 subject to the modification of three paragraphs, as indicated in paragraph 139 of the report.

55. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) said that at the recent session of CPC, his delegation had expressed its reservations concerning activities related to the Preparatory Commission of the Sea-Bed Authority, as mentioned in paragraph 138. While it would not block the adoption of the programme by the General Assembly, it remained firmly opposed to those activities.

56. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) underscored the importance of the codification and progressive development of international law. For that reason, emphasis should be given to paragraph 3 of programme 9. He also felt that high priority should be given to programme 10. Despite the major progress which had been made at recent meetings of the Preparatory Commission, particularly with regard to the registration of pioneer investors, the programme deserved urgent implementation.

Major programme III: International co-operation for economic and social development

57. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that major programme III had originally comprised only programme 11 of the proposed medium-term plan, of which CPC had recommended approval in its report (A/45/16 (Part I), para. 146), subject to the provisos stated therein. The request for a separate programme for Africa had led to the formulation under major programme III of programme 45 (A/45/16 (Part II), paras. 9-17) of which CPC had also recommended approval subject to various modifications.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Revised estimates under sections 3, 13, 27 and 31 and income section 1 (continued) (A/C.5/45/2, A/45/7/Add.2)

58. The CHAIRMAN said that informal consultations on the revised estimates were still under way.

59. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that the amount of $1.4 million referred to by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 10 to 13 of its report (A/45/7/Add.2) had been intended to support university-level studies by Namibians abroad, many of whom were in mid-career. Such training was of particular importance to Namibia. The situation was complicated by the failure to attract voluntary contributions to the United Nations Fund for Namibia. His delegation was extremely concerned over what would happen if such contributions were not forthcoming. With regard to the appeal which the Secretary-General now intended to make, he wished to know what the likelihood was of attracting the amount needed, and what could be done to assist the students affected if contributions fell short of the required amount.

(Mr. Lopez, Venezuela)

60. With respect to the Transitional Unit for Namibia, the Advisory Committee had recommended a smaller staffing table (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 14) than that requested by the Secretary-General, on the assumption that the volume of work to be handled by the Unit was decreasing. In fact approval of a smaller staffing table would mean that the Unit was over-extended. His delegation thus supported the original proposal made by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/2, para. 57).

61. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that his delegation supported the proposed establishment of the Transitional Unit for Namibia, and inquired what the reaction of the Secretariat was to the smaller staffing level proposed by the Advisory Committee. His delegation also supported the recommendations concerning office automation at the Economic Commission for Africa, and noted the alternative proposal made by Japan in that regard. He trusted that it would be possible to reach a consensus in informal consultations.

62. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Venezuela and Morocco. The proposal made by Japan concerning ECA offered a solution which seemed likely to be acceptable to all.

63. Mr. HAMEDA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation questioned the need for the establishment of the Transitional Unit for Namibia, since the activities to be carried out by that Unit could be performed by other political offices and regional organizations. It would be preferable to use the resources where they were really needed. His delegation agreed with the comments of the Advisory Committee (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 7) concerning redeployment of the staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia.

64. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) asked what the net assets of the Institute for Namibia were on its closure in September 1990 and what had happened to them. He also asked for information on the degree of office automation at the various regional commissions.

65. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that his delegation fully appreciated the need for consensus, but was concerned that some were attempting to use that as a strategy to defer approval of the office automation programme at ECA, even though there was general agreement with the Advisory Committee's recommendations. On the understanding that it would not constitute a precedent, the Committee should take a decision on the revised estimates under section 13 without further delay and approve the ECA office automation programme.

66. With regard to the proposed establishment of an information centre in Namibia, his delegation noted that the Government of Namibia was being asked to provide certain facilities, which were not, to his understanding, normally requested of host Governments. The request was particularly inappropriate given United Nations responsibilities towards Namibia. The funding for briefings referred to by the Advisory Committee in its report could be applied to the new nation's needs and should not be deleted.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
21st meeting
held on
Monday, 5 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Ms. MUSTONEN (Vice-Chairman) (Finland)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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12 November 1990

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (*continued*) (A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/226, A/45/370 and A/45/617)

1. *Mr. OWONO MENGUELE* (Cameroon) said that his delegation broadly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) contained in paragraphs 13-25 of document A/45/16 (Part I). It supported the Secretary-General's adjustments to the structures of the Secretariat in the political and administrative areas and believed that conditions were now propitious for similar action in the economic and social sectors. Care should, however, be taken to avoid the hasty elimination of any organ and to promote the process of decentralization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197, in particular by strengthening the regional commissions. In that connection, his delegation was following closely the Secretary-General's endeavours to make the Economic Commission for Africa more effective, looked forward to the Fifth Committee's consideration of measures recommended by the Secretary-General to strengthen that Commission's administrative structure and was also awaiting the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the Commission's language services. The timetable drawn up by the General Assembly for construction work at the headquarters of the regional commissions in Addis Ababa and Bangkok should be scrupulously observed.

2. While reserving the right to revert to personnel questions at a later stage, his delegation wished to emphasize, in connection with recommendation 15 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (Group of 18), that staff reductions should be applied with flexibility in order to avoid any negative impact on programmes. Serious attention should also be devoted to the question of high-level posts, the representation of developing countries in such posts and the mandate of the Office for Human Resources Management (OHRM).

3. Member States must ensure that the Organization had sufficient resources to meet both its traditional and its new responsibilities. Although the new budget process was being applied in a generally satisfactory manner, his delegation fully agreed with CPC that the decision-making process must be governed by the provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The level of the contingency fund must also be adjusted to changing circumstances: given the new challenges faced by the Organization, that issue must receive fresh consideration at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, extraordinary expenses, including those relating to fluctuations in rates of exchange and inflation, should continue to be treated in accordance with established procedures. There was a need to redefine what was constituted by unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

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(Mr. Owono Menguele, Cameroon)

4. The Secretary-General's generally positive assessment of the impact of General Assembly resolution 41/213 was to a large extent warranted. It was more or less possible to state that confidence had been restored in the Organization. Endeavours to restore the Organization's financial viability were as yet incomplete, further consideration being required of matters such as extrabudgetary resources, an equitable scale of assessments, the prompt and regular payment of contributions and management procedures. There had been considerable improvement in the system of programme planning, implementation and monitoring, although much remained to be done in the economic and social sectors. Reform, it must be remembered, was a continuous process: there was a need to consolidate progress already made, to find lasting solutions to existing deficiencies and to devise new instruments to enable the Organization to fulfil its vital tasks.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr. 1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1).

5. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that the introduction to the medium-term plan (A/45/6) should have included a clearer and more coherent assessment of major international problems. Its analysis of legislative mandates should have emphasized trends and reflected the principal priorities, while making clearer the individual contributions of different elements throughout the United Nations system. Its failure to do so appeared to be inconsistent with regulation 3.7 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. The Secretary-General should in future ensure that the introduction fulfilled its purpose as an instrument for analysis, co-ordination and the establishment of major priorities. Notwithstanding those comments, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's policy orientations concerning the maintenance of international peace and security and economic and social development, as well as the related recommendations of CPC and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

6. Turning to the content of the plan itself, he said that the Secretary-General's failure to provide financial data appeared to be inconsistent with the pertinent regulations and should be remedied in future. His delegation also endorsed the Advisory Committee's criticisms of the plan, as contained in paragraph 12 of document A/45/617. Noting that the plan's new structure had had a negative impact on programmes, it urged that every effort be made to avoid further adverse effects in future revisions of the plan. The sectoral introductions of individual programmes should have included broader coverage of the problems and of the responsibilities of different bodies within the system. His delegation accorded particular importance and priority to programmes relating to the economic and social development of developing countries. In particular, it wished to emphasize those relating to the Economic Commission for Africa, *apartheid*, information and African economic recovery and development.

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(Mr. Monthe, Cameroon)

7. The link between the medium-term plan and the programme budget required careful examination, in accordance with the suggestions made by the Advisory Committee. The similarities in the two instruments' structures should be made clearer at both the programme element and output levels. There was also a need to ensure greater predictability of extrabudgetary resources, with a view to enhancing effectiveness, co-ordination and respect for the priorities established by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee's comment in paragraph 14 of document A/45/617 was extremely relevant in that connection.

8. In conclusion, his delegation hoped that detailed consideration of individual programmes in the Fifth Committee, together with the pertinent recommendations of CPC and ACABQ, would lead to the adoption by the General Assembly of what constituted "the principal policy directive of the United Nations".

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme IV. International economic co-operation for development

9. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that CPC recommended approval of all the programmes contained under major programme IV, subject to the modifications, conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 147 to 237 of document A/45/16 (Part I). Under programme 12, the Committee stressed that more emphasis should be given to the link between economic and social development and that the co-ordination of activities with other programmes, as well as with specialized agencies, was an essential element of the programme's implementation. It also recommended that the provisions of certain General Assembly resolutions should be adequately reflected in the relevant subprogrammes as mandates. Suggested modifications to the narrative of programme 12 were contained in paragraph 153.

10. Under programme 13, the major responsibility for implementation of which lay with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre, the Committee recommended that high priority should be assigned to subprogrammes 1, 2 and 3. It also recommended that General Assembly resolution S-18/3 should be included in the legislative mandate of the relevant subprogrammes.

11. Under programme 14, it was recommended that subprogrammes 1 and 2 should be assigned high priority and that the latest relevant General Assembly resolutions should be included as legislative mandates for subprogrammes 1, 2 and 3. The Committee also stressed the need for close co-operation, in particular with the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, on issues related to debt.

12. Under programme 15, the Committee recommended the assignment of high priority to subprogramme 1 and noted that that subprogramme would be adjusted in the light of the results of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 1990. It also noted that the part of subprogramme 2 concerning island developing countries should take into account the results of the forthcoming

(Mr. Abraszewski)

intergovernmental expert meeting scheduled for 1990 and the consideration of the question at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. A number of specific modifications to the narrative of programme 15 were contained in paragraph 175 of the CPC report.

13. Under programme 16, the Committee felt that recent mandates of the General Assembly should have been reflected. It stressed the provisional nature of the programme, which would have to be revised, as appropriate, in the light of the decisions to be taken by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. It also stressed the close relationship between environment and development and emphasized the importance of co-operation and co-ordination within the United Nations system and within the international community as a whole for the implementation of programme 16. It recommended that subprogramme 13 should be renamed Global and regional co-operation, and should also be designated high priority. It felt that the issues of deforestation, drought and desertification should have been better highlighted and that the activities of the regional commissions in the area should have been specifically acknowledged.

14. With regard to programme 17, CPC recommended that the legislative mandates derived from the most recent General Assembly resolutions on the subject should be fully reflected in the programme. Under programme 18, subprogramme 5 concerning technical co-operation in population was recommended for high priority. In connection with programme 19, the Committee agreed that General Assembly resolution 44/228 should be included as legislative authority for subprogramme 2 and stressed the fact that the programme would need to be revised in the light of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

15. The Committee recommended that the relation between environment and energy should be emphasized throughout programme 20, and that co-ordination should be improved. It further recommended that high priority should be given to subprogramme 6, Development and transfer of technology for exploiting critical energy resources.

16. The Committee proposed some corrections to the narrative of programme 21 and emphasized the need to avoid programme overlap and to enhance co-ordination between the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Under programme 22, the Committee was of the view that the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 should be more fully reflected throughout the programme and recommended high priority for subprogramme 6, Infrastructure development and operation. With reference to programme 23, it considered that emphasis should be placed on the impact and role of transnational corporations in the context of environment and development, and recommended some amendments to the narrative. Lastly, with regard to programme 24, the Committee stressed the importance of the reliability, comparability and availability of statistical information and the need to maintain the central and intersectoral role of the Statistical Office.

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17. MR. ZVONKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation fully shared the conclusion of CPC contained in paragraph 188 of document A/45/16 (Part I). The fact that environmental issues constituted a major international problem had not been adequately reflected in the medium-term plan. There was almost no reference in the presentation of the corresponding programme to the effects on the environment of production and consumption patterns in the developed countries. His delegation therefore took note with satisfaction of the comments of CPC in paragraph 186 of its report and believed that programme 16 should duly reflect the new mandates of the General Assembly arising from resolutions adopted at its forty-fourth session, as well as any legislative provisions deriving from resolutions adopted during the current session.

18. Mr. GARRIDO (Philippines) proposed that, in view of the developing countries' critical debt problem which had been exacerbated by recent developments, subprogramme 3 of programme 12, concerning external debt and development, and subprogramme 2 of programme 14, concerning debt and development problems of developing countries, should be merged within a single programme. Referring to paragraph 12.42 of document A/45/6 concerning programme 12, he said that falling commodity prices and rising interest rates were not the only adverse external situations to have compounded the debt problem. He endorsed the proposed course of action of the Secretariat under both subprogrammes, but reminded the Committee that, at its previous session, it had authorized the sending of debt missions to developing countries and suggested that the Secretariat should base its research and analysis on their reports. His delegation also wished to see a larger number of such missions sent to investigate conditions in developing countries with a heavy external debt burden.

19. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) said that the delicate and important balance achieved in the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, adopted at the eighteenth special session, between the responsibilities of developing countries for their own development and the responsibilities of the industrialized countries to contribute to a supportive international economic environment appeared to have been lost in the introduction and relevant programmes of the medium-term plan. The acknowledgement in the Declaration of the existence of an internationally agreed strategy for addressing the debt problems of developing countries and the call for broad implementation of that strategy did not appear to have been reflected in the plan, particularly in the introduction, which passed premature judgement on the debt strategy and appeared to invite alternative solutions. His delegation could not endorse that view, nor the implied call for an operational role for the United Nations in that area.

20. The introduction also spoke of a United Nations role in supporting efforts to arrest and reverse the negative net transfer of resources from developing countries. In his view, capital flows responded essentially to economic conditions and policies in each country. The real solution for improving the balance of resources was therefore to create the necessary conditions within each country to attract the vast potential reserves of private capital.

(Mr. Bennett, United States)

21. His delegation recalled that, at the thirteenth session of CPC, it had entered a reservation (A/45/16 (Part I), para. 171) regarding activities contained in programme 15 relating to the economic and social development of Palestinians, in the belief that those programmes did not provide any real benefit to the Palestinian people. In that connection, he drew attention to the fact that his country was a major contributor to the UNDP development programme for Palestinians.

22. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that he did not agree with the distinction drawn by the United States between peace and security, on the one hand, and co-operation for development, on the other. He therefore proposed that the title of major programme IV should be amended to read: "Maintenance of peace and security: international economic co-operation for development". He supported the proposal by the representative of the Philippines that due importance should be given to the debt problems of developing countries by merging the two subprogrammes relating to that issue.

23. It was irrelevant to maintain that resource flows merely followed the dictates of conditions and policies in each country. The point was that existing arrangements worked to the detriment of the majority of Member States and gave undue advantage to just a few. For the sake of equity, such arrangements should be adjusted, and debt and resource transfer issues should be properly addressed by the United Nations and reflected in the medium-term plan and all relevant programmes.

Major programme V. International co-operation for social development

24. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that CPC recommended approval of the major programme subject to a number of amendments. It noted the close relationship between programme 25 and a number of other programmes in the medium-term plan, and accordingly stressed the need for increased co-ordination. With reference to programme 26, the Committee noted that no priority designation had been proposed among the three subprogrammes. It recommended approval of programme 27; paragraphs 249 and 250 of the report reflected the views of the Committee on that progrmme. It also recommended approval of programme 28, on international drug control, on the understanding that the programme was provisional and would be revised in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation to reflect all recent mandates contained in the global programme of action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session. It also recommended approval of programme 29, subject to one amendment.

25. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) proposed, for reasons of consistency with his proposal concerning major programme IV, that the title of major programme V should be amended to read: "Maintenance of peace and security: international co-operation for social development".

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 concerning agenda item 29 (A/C.5/45/5 and Corr.1 and A/45/7/Add.4)

26. *Mr. MSELLE* (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the fifth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/45/7/Add.4), on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3, concerning the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, said that, on the basis of the assumptions outlined in paragraphs 4 to 16 of his statement (A/C.5/45/25 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General estimated that an additional non-recurrent appropriation of $6,742,100 would be required under section 1 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991, with an additional appropriation of $379,200 under section 31, which would be offset by the same amount under income section 1. In table 3 of the Secretary-General's statement, on staffing requirements in 1991, a total of 63 posts was proposed, including five additional temporary posts. As explained in paragraph 4 of its report, the Advisory Committee questioned the need for the proposed additional posts. In paragraph 7 of its report, the Advisory Committee reiterated its request that any future requests pertaining to resolutions and decisions on Afghanistan should clearly relate the resources requested to the objectives being implemented.

27. After considering the Secretary-General's statement and the additional information it had received, the Advisory Committee recommended an additional non-recurrent appropriation of $6,150,000 under section 1 of the programme budget, with an additional appropriation of $336,100 under section 31, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1.

28. *Mr. ETUKET* (Uganda) pointed out that, according to paragraph 14 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/45/25), the additional appropriation proposed for the biennium 1990-1991 could not be absorbed within existing appropriations. In the view of his delegation, the Committee needed more time to reflect on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 before it could take a decision.

29. *Mr. DANKWA* (Ghana) noted that the activities pertaining to Afghanistan were fully funded until the end of 1990 and pointed out that the proposed appropriations now under consideration related to 1991. Since the Committee had more urgent matters to consider at the present time, he proposed that it should continue its discussion of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 at a later date.

30. *The CHAIRMAN* said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to postpone further discussion of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 until the following day.

31. *It was so decided*.

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Revised estimates under sections 3, 13, 27 and 31 and income section 1 (continued) (A/C.5/45/2 and A/45/7/Add.2)

32. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), referring to paragraph 40 (b) of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/2) asked the Secretariat to justify the amount of $275,000 for the acquisition of basic publications on Namibia. He wished to know, specifically, how many copies of each publication were to be produced and what was the estimated target readership.

33. Regarding the revised estimates under section 13, he wished to know how long it would be before the automation project for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was fully operational.

34. Mr. KANDJOZE (Namibia) said that General Assembly resolution 44/243, which had so gratifyingly signalled the completion by the United Nations Council for Namibia of its historic mission, had acknowledged the fact that there were still ongoing programmes and projects in Namibia, especially the Nationhood Programme and the individual scholarship programme. His delegation appealed to the members of the Committee to ensure that funds were made available to enable the young beneficiaries of those programmes, whose skills would provide an invaluable contribution to the reconstruction and development of Namibia, to pursue their studies. It was essential that, as in previous years, $US 1.5 million should be set aside in the coming year from the General Account towards the completion of those programmes. Voluntary contributions were also needed and would be appreciated. His delegation also hoped that the United Nations Institute for Namibia would be wound down smoothly.

35. His Government welcomed the proposed establishment of an information centre in Namibia, as recommended by General Assembly resolution 44/50. Regarding final arrangements for the establishment of the centre, it should be borne in mind that the new Government had various challenges to meet and might therefore not be able to fulfil certain requirements.

36. It was his Government's wish that the unused funds originally set aside for a seminar on programme planning for the national reconstruction and development of Namibia should remain available. Arrangements were currently being made, within the context of the Government's priorities as put forward at the Donor Pledging Conference on Namibia in June 1990, to make the best utilization of such funds before the end of the year.

37. Mr. CHABALA (Zambia) said that it was important for the revised estimates under section 3C to take due account of the impact of Namibian independence and the implications of General Assembly resolution 44/243 A, which approved the continued implementation of a limited programme of activities for the biennium 1990-1991. Indeed, in view of Namibia's peculiar situation, it would have been more realistic for the Advisory Committee to base its recommendations on the assumption that such programmes should remain as mandated unless the Namibian Government indicated otherwise. The representative of Namibia had, in fact, just reaffirmed his Government's wish to maintain some of the programmes. It therefore seemed

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(Mr. Chabala, Zambia)

premature for the Advisory Committee to recommend the deletion of the estimate of $241,800 for a seminar on programme planning for the national reconstruction and development of Namibia.

38. The Advisory Committee was right to recommend the speedy redeployment of staff members of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia by the end of 1990, but his delegation would welcome an assurance from the Secretariat that the deadline could be met and information about how the redeployment was to be carried out.

39. In paragraph 9, the Advisory Committee recommended that the comprehensive national census for Namibia should be carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and if possible financed from outside the regular budget. Since the project was so important, it should preferably be financed from the regular budget.

40. On the question of United Nations grants, ACABQ seemed to endorse the Secretary-General's statement that the necessary additional amounts would be financed solely from voluntary contributions. His delegation believed that training programmes were so crucial to the new Namibian nation that they should all be funded from a sure source, namely, the regular budget. The programme in question was a mandated one and there should be no element of uncertainty about its funding.

41. The Advisory Committee's recommendations in paragraphs 14 and 15 concerning the Transitional Unit for Namibia were well founded. The Unit must be able to provide administrative backstopping to the Trust Committee for the Fund for Namibia. However, the question of the actual number of staff of the Unit should be taken up in the informal consultations.

42. With regard to section 3B, the Advisory Committee recommended that the functions of the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes of the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship should be reviewed. His delegation had no problem with that recommendation, but in paragraph 17 the Advisory Committee recommended the abolition of certain posts, some of which the Secretary-General had recommended should be attached to the Unit. It would have been more logical to await the outcome of the review of the Unit's functions before recommending the abolition of any posts. It was also important to bear in mind the special political character of the Unit; its functions were not the same as those of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or other emergency relief agencies, as ACABQ suggested in paragraph 16.

43. ACABQ had reacted unfavourably to the request made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 69 to 78 of his report for new posts for the Centre against Apartheid (section 3D). In paragraph 19, for example, with reference to the scholarship programme implemented under the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, it noted that there was no indication that the number of scholarships had increased. However, the Advisory Committee for that Programme had

(Mr. Chabala, Zambia)

concluded that, in view of the changes in South Africa, the emphasis would shift to the provision of training for as many South Africans as possible both inside and outside the country, as opposed to training for refugees and exiles. The Secretary-General's request was therefore based on an expected increase in needs, not on the current number of scholarships.

44. With regard to public information (section 27), the Advisory Committee's favourable recommendation concerning a United Nations information centre in Namibia was well founded. However, the Fifth Committee needed a response from the Secretariat to the point raised by the representative of Uganda at the 18th meeting concerning the situation with regard to the opening of information centres. It must be remembered that Namibia was a special case: it had inherited only a rudimentary infrastructure from the colonial régime, and the new Government could not be expected to provide certain facilities taken for granted in other countries. ACABQ stated, in paragraph 24, that it had difficulty recognizing the effectiveness of holding briefings in December 1990 or early 1991, over nine months after Namibia's independence. However, as the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 80 (a) of his report, the purpose of the briefings was to promote public awareness of the needs of the new nation. His delegation could not therefore agree with the ACABQ comment.

45. In contrast, it was happy to endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendation for approval of an additional appropriation under section 13 for office automation at ECA, since the Commission's ability to fulfil its mandate was indeed greatly hampered by the technical backwardness of its facilities. The project would enhance the capacity of ECA for technical backstopping and substantive servicing, as well as its pivotal role in the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The work of the African delegations at United Nations Headquarters would also be enhanced, for they often received the documents adopted at Addis Ababa late simply because of processing delays.

46. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda), referring to paragraph 44 of the report of CPC on the second part of its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part II)), said that his delegation regretted that the Fifth Committee had not been able to benefit from the input on the revised estimates that CPC had been expected to provide.

47. In its resolucion 44/243 A, the General Assembly had dissolved the United Nations Council for Namibia and approved the continued implementation of a limited programme of activities for the biennium 1990-1991. He noted that in paragraph 3 of its third report (A/45/7/Add.2), the Advisory Committee stated that the revised estimates were based on the assumption that a major component of the related activities would be completed by the end of 1990. Referring to the proposed seminar on programme planning for the national reconstruction and development of Namibia, he said that his delegation appreciated the difficult situation which the Government of Namibia was currently facing in the light of its new nationhood; perhaps the Advisory Committee could have taken that into account and have waited for a response from the Namibian Government as to whether it wished the seminar to be held or not. He hoped that the recommendation that the estimate of $241,800 for

(Mr. Etuket, Uganda)

the seminar should be deleted would be pre-empted if the Government decided that it did indeed wish to hold the seminar. Paragraphs 5 to 7 of the report of the Advisory Committee, on the redeployment of staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia should be considered in conjunction with paragraphs 18 to 21, on staffing of the Centre against Apartheid; General Assembly resolutions 44/201 B, and 44/243, also dealt with redeployment. His delegation would appreciate it if the Secretariat would provide as to whether there was a clear timetable for the redeployment mentioned in paragraph 5 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/45/7/Add.2); whether such a schedule, if it existed, took into account General Assembly resolutions 44/201 and 44/243 and paragraph 44 of the report of CPC (A/45/16 (Part II)) concerning the priority to be accorded, inter alia, to the Centre against Apartheid and ECA; and whether it could give some assurance that the redeployment would be carried out before the end of 1990, especially in the light of the need to avoid a deterioration of staff morale.

48. He wished to draw attention to paragraph 69 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/2), which stressed the fact that the process of change that appeared to have started in South Africa made the work of the Centre against Apartheid more complex and demanding than in the past, and paragraph 71, which stressed the need to strengthen the Centre against Apartheid. Those observations of the Secretary-General should be taken very seriously. His delegation realized that the issue was very sensitive politically; it was still too early to tell whether the developments inside South Africa were truly irreversible. It was all the more important, therefore, to strengthen the Centre and enable it to monitor and assess developments in South Africa objectively.

49. Noting that the independent evaluation of the scholarship programme under the United Nations Education and Training Programme for Southern Africa, had shown that there was a need for more related staff (A/C.5/45/2, para. 72), he said that his delegation endorsed the proposal, as well as the proposal concerning the staffing of the Centre against Apartheid mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/45/7/Add.2). The Fifth Committee should not take a decision on the matter until further in-depth informal consultations had been held. With regard to the preparation of a comprehensive national census for Namibia, mentioned in paragraph 8 of the report of the Advisory Committee, he said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Namibia on that question, as well as the observations made by the representative of Zambia. The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to mobilize resources in order that UNFPA might be ready to carry out the census when the Government of Namibia requested it. The Secretary-General should ensure that adequate resources were provided for that purpose, even if that meant taking resources from the regular budget.

50. With regard to the question of United Nations grants, he said that his delegation wished to stress the humanitarian nature of the request to support those students who were currently struggling with their studies with a view to assisting the Government of Namibia in its future efforts for development. His delegation endorsed the comments that had been made in that regard by the representatives of

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(Mr. Etuket, Uganda)

Venezuela and Zambia. It would not be appropriate to establish a linkage between the humanitarian support for Namibian students and the question of the liquidation of the residual obligations of the Institute for Namibia.

51. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the Transitional Unit for Namibia, which should be able to accomplish the orderly implementation of all programmes and activities currently financed from the Fund for Namibia. In that regard, he noted the observations in paragraphs 53 to 57 of the report of the Secretary-General, but felt that the Secretariat should provide more comprehensive information on the workload of the proposed unit.

52. With regard to section 27, he said that his delegation was particularly interested in the setting up of an information centre in Windhoek. He wished to reiterate his request for more detailed information from the Secretariat; specifically, he would appreciate it if the Department of Public Information would indicate exactly what was being requested from the Government of Namibia in order for the information centre to be opened. His delegation also wanted to know what the Secretariat, for its part, would be providing to facilitate the establishment of the Centre. In resolution 44/50, the General Assembly had been very explicit in directing that an information centre should be established in Namibia, and it would therefore be unfortunate if there was an attempt to introduce certain conditions in order to inhibit its speedy opening. He would appreciate it if the Secretariat would provide comprehensive information, possibly in the form of a conference room paper, on previous practice regarding the establishment of information centres, in particular, he would like to know what had been the contributions of the host Government in each case and whether such a contribution had been a condition for the opening of the centre or merely a voluntary contribution on the part of the Government. Such information would be helpful not only in the case of the information centre in Namibia, but also in future situations.

53. With regard to section 13, he said that his delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee set forth in paragraphs 26 to 29 of its report. The question of ECA was one on which the General Assembly had approved many mandates; it seemed that the problem was how fast and to what extent those mandates were implemented.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
22nd meeting
held on
Monday, 5 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOULIK (Vice-Chairman) (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Koulik (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

Major programme I. Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization (continued)

1. Mr. MAJOLI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Economic Community, said that, in reviewing the major progammes of the medium-term plan, it would seem more profitable to proceed on the basis of an assessment of the overall balance, since renewed consideration of the substantive merits of specific mandates was unlikely to produce any change in the position of delegations; on the contrary, it would prejudice the prospect of achieving consensus on the plan as a whole.

2. Regulation 3.2 of the Regulations and Rules governing Programme Planning provided that the medium-term plan should translate legislative mandates into programmes; the plan was clearly, therefore, not intended to be a simple compilation of mandates and its provisions should not be contrary to legislative intent. However, if every word of the plan was required to have appeared verbatim in a resolution or decision of an intergovernmental organ, many elements of the current draft would be open to question. In that connection, he recalled the debates in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) on the legislative basis for the assumption in programme 2 that the Security Council would hold meetings away from Headquarters or the reference in programme 8 to outer space as a "global common". The Twelve recognized that the use of the term "peace-making" in United Nations documents was relatively recent, but it was a very old concept that was consistent with the entire thrust of the United Nations Charter. It summed up in one word an area of activity in which the Secretary-General did not require a specific mandate from an intergovernmental body. The Twelve found it hard to understand how the term could be open to objection and strongly supported the Secretary-General's peace-making activities.

3. The Twelve agreed that, in changing circumstances, the time was perhaps coming when the overall structure of the medium-term plan would need substantial review, but they doubted whether, in the remainder of the section, it would be practical to undertake a major exercise of rationalization and revision. The plan was to be revised in 1992 when it entered into force and it would not be practical to amend the text continuously so as to reflect resolutions that were currently being negotiated. Amendments should be introduced only in exceptional circumstances. CPC, as the competent subsidiary body, had formulated a consensus recommendation on

(Mr. Majoli, Italy)

the draft of all substantive major programmes. While there might be some scope for further refinement in areas such as the designation of priorities, the Twelve believed that those general considerations would need to be borne constantly in mind if consensus was to be maintained on the document that constituted the Organization's principal policy directive.

Major programme VI. Regional co-operation for economic and social development

4. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination) said that major programme VI of the proposed medium-term plan consisted of five programmes, on which CPC had commented in paragraphs 259 to 283 of its report (A/45/16 (Part I)). It recommended the approval of programme 30, Regional co-operation for development in Africa, with a number of modifications, including the establishment of new subprogrammes, the renaming of some subprogrammes and the designation of the new subprogramme on economic co-operation and integration as high priority.

5. The Committee also recommended the approval of programme 31, Regional co-operation for development in Asia and the Pacific. It had noted, however, that, owing to the postponement of the session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), that body had not had an opportunity to review the programme before the first part of the CPC session. During the second part of its thirtieth session, in September, the Secretary-General had informed CPC orally that ESCAP had made no recommendations about priority setting for subprogrammes. In its report on the second part of its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part II)), CPC recommended that the General Assembly should give appropriate consideration to the question of priority setting among subprogrammes when it reviewed programme 31 of the proposed medium-term plan. He understood that the Director for Programme Planning and Budget would provide additional information in that regard.

6. CPC also recommended approval of programme 32, Regional co-operation for development in Europe, but pointed out that adjustments might need to be made in the context of the review being undertaken by the Economic Commission for Europe. It also recommended that the term "centrally planned economies" should be replaced by "Central and Eastern European States" throughout the programme.

7. Regarding programme 33, Regional co-operation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean, CPC stressed that the problem of environment should be linked to the general issue of development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/228. It also recommended that the priority designation for subprogramme 2, on economic development, should be amended to "high priority".

8. Lastly, CPC recommended approval of programme 34, Regional co-operation for development in western Asia, with some drafting changes.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Revised estimates under sections 3, 13 and 27 and income section 1 (continued) (A/C.5/45/2 and A/45/7/Add.2)

9. Mr. WU Gang (China) said that his delegation shared some of the concerns expressed by other delegations about the revised estimates for section 3 and believed that the Secretariat should provide more information in order to facilitate the Committee's work. He asked whether sufficient voluntary contributions had been made to the Fund for Namibia to provide the Namibian students with the necessary assistance; if not, the Secretariat could perhaps find other resources so that the students could continue their studies.

10. As to the staff resources proposed by the Secretariat for the Transitional Unit, it would be advisable for the Secretariat to provide detailed information on the Unit's work-load, so that the Committee could determine the exact number of staff that would be needed to carry out the residual programmes relating to Namibia. The staffing resources proposed for the Centre against Apartheid should also be reviewed with the same end in view.

11. Mr. LAWSON (Sierra Leone) said that his delegation had taken note of the plan to hold a seminar on programme planning for the national reconstruction and development of Namibia (A/C.5/45/2, para. 20). It had also observed that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) did not think it necessary to hold the planned seminar on the grounds that the matter of the national reconstruction and development of Namibia had already been discussed at the Donor Pledging Conference on Namibia (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 4). In his opinion, however, the purpose of the seminar was to set priorities for the way in which the national reconstruction and development of Namibia should proceed and he did not believe that that specific aspect had been considered at the Donor Pledging Conference. It was very necessary for the programme planning process to be carried out, not only to convince donors of its practical usefulness in regard to the reconstruction and development of Namibia, but also to determine those areas on which attention should be focused once the process had started. He therefore believed that the matter should be considered and that the amount requested by the Secretary-General was appropriate.

12. His delegation had also noted that General Assembly resolution 44/243 requested the Secretary-General to give priority to the redeployment of the staff of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia and that the Advisory Committee's report indicated that some 28 staff members working at Headquarters had already been reassigned to other branches of the Secretariat, or would be shortly, adding that it should not be too difficult to place the remaining staff by the end of 1990 (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 7). He wondered what grounds the Advisory Committee had for its optimism. It would be advisable for the Secretariat to inform the Committee how many staff members had been redeployed since the Secretary-General's report and what the prospects were for redeploying the reest before the end of 1990. He would also like to know what would happen to the staff who could not be redeployed before the closing date.

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(Mr. Lawson, Sierra Leone)

13. The report's comments on section 13 were exceptionally frank and revealing. The serious problems affecting the functioning of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) because of the technological backwardness of its facilities, described in paragraph 90 of document A/C.5/45/2, made him wonder how matters could have reached such a pitch and how, in such conditions, ECA had managed to perform the tasks assigned to it in the 1980s. Obviously, as noted on several occasions, it lacked the equipment it needed to meet the challenges of the 1990s and that state of affairs should not be allowed to go on a moment longer. The question was whether the Secretary-General had not underestimated in his request the resources needed for office automation at ECA. Perhaps more information was needed from the Secretariat on that point.

14. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana), referring to the recommendations on section 3D of the budget, relating to the Centre against *Apartheid*, drew attention to an inconsistency between the CPC proposal to reallocate resources to priority activities relating to *apartheid* and the Advisory Committee's recommendation that no additional staff was needed and that the upgrading of posts was not justified (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 22). The question needing an answer was whether or not the resources would be sufficient to implement the programmes. He was not trying to challenge those two bodies but to find out whether the matter had been properly thought out and whether those additional resources were believed to be unnecessary for the effective implementation of the programmes.

15. Ghana, as a member of the Special Committee against *Apartheid*, knew what difficulties the Centre faced. It was therefore not surprised by the request for the establishment of two new P-3 posts and one General Service post because the Centre needed additional staff resources. The Secretary-General's report indicated that one of the P-3 posts was requested in order to provide support to the Commission against *Apartheid* in Sports (A/C.5/45/2, para. 72). The Advisory Committee had pointed out that since the Commission was already being serviced by a Secretary at the P-5 level it did not consider that an additional P-3 post was justified (A/45/7/Add.2, para. 19). However, it did not take into account that the P-5 official did not work exclusively for the Commission but had been requested to take on other duties in addition to his normal functions. In the circumstances, it was absolutely impossible for that official to carry out the tasks entrusted to him in connection with the Commission against *Apartheid* in Sports. It was surprising that the Advisory Committee should have been able to reach such a conclusion.

16. Another P-3 post had been requested to provide additional administrative support for the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development in implementing a scholarship programme under the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (A/C.5/45/2, para. 72). The purpose of that proposal was to charge the administrative expenses of the scholarship programme to the regular budget and to allocate all the funds received from voluntary contributions for the programme's real objective, namely, scholarships. That would be the most effective way of investing the scholarship programme's resources.

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(Mr. Dankwa, Ghana)

17. Ghana believed that the upgrading of the post of Special Assistant to the Assistant-Secretary-General of the Center against Apartheid from the P-4 to the P-5 level was more than justified by the greater volume of work that the incumbent was required to do. The same was true of the proposal to reclassify a post in the Publicity, Assistance and Promotion of International Action Branch (A/C.5/45/2, para. 73). Publicity was currently very necessary because a current of opinion seemed to have arisen that was not based on the concepts of the United Nations and which gave rise to acts contrary to the Organization's resolutions aimed at eliminating apartheid. The only solution was to extend publicity to that area and provide more information on apartheid.

18. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the level of financial resources recommended by the Advisory Committee in respect of Namibia and other programmes was too high. His delegation had not expected resources to be allocated to those programmes after 1990.

19. As far as the ECA programmes were concerned, the United States delegation recognized the need to improve the regional Commission's office technology and although it had some difficulty with the amount of resources requested, it was ready to accept the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee.

20. Views had been expressed during the debate to the effect that informal consultations would be necessary in order to maintain the consensus. Given the success achieved so far in reaching a consensus, his delegation saw no reason for the time being to follow any other procedure.

21. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to the question of information centres, said that in paragraph 2 of resolution 1405 (XIV) the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, with the agreement of the Governments concerned, to establish such new information centres as appeared necessary and practicable, particularly in those regions where mass information media were less developed. The United Nations practice in that respect had been to enter into an agreement with the Government of the host country and try to get it to share in some aspect of the centre's financing. However, participation in the financing of a centre was not a condition for opening one. The arrangements for financing by the United Nations and the host country, although they could vary considerably from case to case, were not related to the country's situation, especially with regard to its degree of development. In the specific case of the Windhoek Information Centre, if it was agreed, during the negotiations between the United Nations and the Government of Namibia, that the latter would finance some items of expenditure for the Centre, it would be indicated in a future report on the matter. However, at the current revised estimates stage, provision had been made for all the costs involved in establishing the Centre, so that only the approval of the Assembly was needed.

22. With regard to the questions about the posts in the Office of the Commissioner for Namibia, it should be noted that, when the revised estimates were prepared, 36 of the 61 posts were still occupied, although all of them, as was well known, were

(Mr. Baudot)

to be eliminated at the end of 1990. Since the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/45/2) had been submitted, 13 of the 36 staff members concerned had been redeployed to other posts, leaving 23 staff members occupying posts. The differences between those figures and those in the Advisory Committee's report (A/45/7/Add.2) were due to changes in the staffing table of the Transitional Unit. It was currently estimated that, by the end of December 1990, 11 staff members would have been placed in other posts and 12 would still be awaiting redeployment. As the Secretary-General had always said, the staff who had served on Namibia would be kept to the end of 1991, whether or not they were placed in other posts. That was the reason for the resources requested.

23. Questions had also been asked about the scholarship programme referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/45/7/Add.2). It should be recalled that the General Account of the United Nations Fund for Namibia financed scholarships and a series of training projects. In resolution 44/243, the General Assembly had decided that the Fund should continue to operate in order to ensure the orderly completion of all programmes and activities currently financed from it, and also that a Trust Committee should be established to serve as the trustee of the Fund until its dissolution. It was estimated that the cost of the scholarship programme would be approximately $1.1 million in 1991 and $500,000 in 1992, and that 79 students would be given scholarships in 1991 and 30 in 1992. However, as noted in paragraph 49 of the Secretary-General's report, the General Account would have a negative closing balance in 1990. It was therefore planned to issue an appeal to Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations and individuals for voluntary contributions. Consultations would be held with the Trust Committee and the Government of Namibia on other steps which should be taken to finance the scholarships. Consideration would be given to the possibility of transferring funds from the Nationhood Programme Account, which currently had a surplus. Consequently, there were also other possibilities, apart from voluntary contributions, for continuing the scholarship programme in 1991 without adversely affecting the scholarship holders.

24. With regard to ECA, it was not possible for the time being to determine exactly when the technological improvement programme would be completed. As far as the Secretary-General's proposal to redeploy posts under section 3D (Centre against Apartheid) was concerned, it should be noted that the proposal had been made on the basis of an evaluation of the programme's needs and that there was no possibility of changing it. For the time being, the Secretariat was not in a position to provide information on the work-load of the Transitional Unit for Namibia, but it would do so at a later stage, during the informal consultations.

25. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that he had not received a clear reply to his question concerning the United Nations information centres. He asked why the opening of the information centre in Namibia had been delayed and what contributions the United Nations requested in general from countries in which information centres were situated.

26. Mr. LOPEZ (Venezuela) said that assurances would be needed concerning scholarships for Namibian students, since the question of training was of great importance at the current stage in the history of Namibia. The Committee could make funds available for those scholarships, by approving the necessary appropriations, on the understanding that if any extrabudgetary funds were available the Secretary-General would use them instead.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/45/541 and A/45/548; A/C.5/45/3, A/C.5/45/10 and Corr.1, A/C.5/45/11, A/C.5/45/12, A/C.5/45/18 and A/C.5/45/19)

27. Mr. SUCHMAN (Czechoslovakia) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/10) contained alarming facts concerning violations of the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials, and that no effort should be spared to ensure that such officials were able to carry out their duties without risk to their lives. Recognition should be given to the role of international civil servants, who performed varied and exacting tasks under difficult and even risky conditions.

28. With regard to the report of Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541), it would have been better if the information provided in table A, concerning the staff of the Secretariat and of the secretariats of other United Nations organs, had been compared with that for previous years. It was gratifying to note that between 1987 and 1989 the number of posts financed from the regular budget had been reduced by 11.95 per cent without any effect on the continuity and delivery of the activities of the Organization. With regard to the last column of table B of the report, the unbalance in the distribution resulting from the overrepresentation of some Member States was a matter for concern. Moreover, there should be an increase in the number of posts subject to geographical distribution; the current figure was 2,561, which represented only a small proportion of the total United Nations staff.

29. A welcome development was that the percentage of women appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution had increased to 31.2 per cent, compared with 26.86 per cent in the previous period. However, the percentages above 30 per cent were recorded at the P-1 to P-3 levels. It was therefore encouraging that, since 30 June 1990, the number of women in D-2 posts had increased from 8 to 10. Czechoslovakia endorsed the Secretary-General's conclusion, in paragraph 184 of document A/45/226, that more effort was needed to achieve a better balance at the higher levels.

30. One consequence of the peaceful democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia was the new approach to the use of the enormous potential of the United Nations. His Government was adopting measures to exclude any possible contradiction between the rights and duties of Czechoslovak citizens and their status as independent international civil servants. At the current time the number of Czechoslovak staff members had decreased to 14, while the country's desirable range was 12-22, and Czechoslovakia was not represented at the D-2 level and above. Furthermore, as shown by table 10 in document A/45/541, the position of the Czechoslovak staff

(Mr. Suchman, Czechoslovakia)

members was well below the weighted range of the posts subject to geographical distribution. It was to be hoped that that situation would change.

31. Czechoslovakia looked forward with great interest to receiving a United Nations mission early in 1991, in connection with the holding of national competitive examinations for the recruitment of staff. It would be advisable, however, to continue the practice of secondment, which was mutually beneficial since it meant that experienced and skilled staff could be sent to the United Nations Secretariat, and they could then use the new skills acquired during their secondment at the disposal of the civil service of Czechoslovakia.

32. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) regretted having to point out that there had been no significant change in the geographical distribution of posts. Although the number of underrepresented Member States had been reduced from 26 to 19, approximately 20 per cent of all Member States were still unrepresented or underrepresented. Japan was underrepresented by approximately 60 staff members below the lower limit of its desirable range and 90 below the mid-point. No improvement could be seen on that front, and Japan, while sparing no effort to submit as many qualified candidates as possible, requested that the following steps should be taken to improve the situation.

33. First, according to paragraph 45 of the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541), of the 202 appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution during the period from 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1990, five were of nationals of overrepresented Member States, and the number of such States had increased from 18 to 19. Japan suggested that all recruitment from overrepresented States to senior level posts, including those of Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General, should be suspended until those States came back within range. His delegation wondered why it had been deemed necessary to recruit those five staff members from overrepresented States. It might be necessary once again to establish the target set by General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 of 40 per cent of all vacancies arising in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution for the appointment of nationals of underrepresented or unrepresented countries.

34. The second step that should be taken was to establish a medium-term plan to ensure that all Member States came within their desirable ranges, based on specific goals and appropriate monitoring.

35. Thirdly, the new vacancy management system, while apparently facilitating the effective use of human resources, had had a negative impact on equitable geographical distribution. It had greatly reduced the number of staff members recruited from outside, by giving preference to those already on the staff. Japan requested that nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented countries should be permitted to apply for posts described in internal vacancy announcements.

36. Fourthly, competitive examinations should be held to recruit staff members from unrepresented or underrepresented countries to posts at the P-1, P-2 and P-3

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

levels, in accordance with recommendation 43 of the Group of 18 and with the request made by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. He welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General intended to organize national competitive examinations for posts at the P-3 level in 1991 in two occupational groups; it was to be hoped that that number would increase every year.

37. Paragraph 46 of document A/45/541 stated that appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution had included those of 69 candidates who had been successful in national competitive examinations. Table 6 of the report showed that 98 staff members had been appointed at the P-1 and P-2 levels. Therefore, at least 29 appointments had been made on a basis other than national competitive examinations. His delegation would be grateful if the Secretariat could explain in detail how those staff members had been recruited.

38. The column in table 7 headed "Other staff changes" showed that 74 people had moved to posts subject to geographical distribution. It was important to know how many of them had moved to those posts on the basis of competitive examinations, how the appointments had been decided where no examinations had been held, and whether it had been absolutely impossible to fill the posts through examinations. There were only 2,500 posts subject to geographical distribution, and those must always be filled in accordance with the Staff Rules and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. If, in any particular instance, there was a reason not to apply those provisions, it should be noted and explained in the Secretary-General's report.

39. The Organization's strength depended not only on its ability to recruit new talent but also on the ability of its staff to grow in knowledge and competence. Many types of training were needed, but resources were unfortunately limited. For that reason, great importance attached to on-the-job training, the expansion of job responsibilities and job rotation. Full support should therefore be given to recommendation 48 of the Group of 18 that staff members should be recruited and their careers developed on the basis of occupational groups rather than on a post-by-post basis. It was essential that the Secretariat should, in the near future, put forward a feasible training programme to update the substantive knowledge of the staff, to increase its mobility within the Organization and to strengthen its capacity to deliver programmes.

40. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that, while the implementation of recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 had been generally satisfactory, the planned reduction in the number of posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels had still not been achieved. Although the number of Hungarian staff members in the Secretariat was within the desirable range, it was still very low, and it was most regrettable that none of them occupied posts at the P-5 level and above, the Government of Hungary would endeavour to propose suitable candidates in order to remedy that situation, but the co-operation of the Secretariat was also required. His country could accept both permanent and fixed-term contracts. However, it believed that, while secondment on a limited scale could be beneficial to the Organization, it could also adversely affect the Secretariat's independence and effectiveness and the careers of the persons

(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

concerned. An effort should be made to reconcile the interests of the Organization, Governments and individuals and to regulate the secondment procedure.

41. His delegation was pleased to note the progress made in the representation of women in the Secretariat, especially the fact that 2 of the 13 newly recruited women were Hungarian. At the same time, the proportion of women from certain regions, including Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, was very small. In further attempts to meet the target of 30 per cent for the representation of women, priority should be given to those regions. There was also a great need to improve the representation of women in higher-level posts.

42. In analysing the Secretariat's proposals for groupings of Member States, his delegation had come to the conclusion that there was no one perfect answer. Every system obscured the real situation of individual Member States and was therefore of little use in identifying the most critical cases. The Secretariat proposed the elimination of one of the anachronistic features of the grouping system, namely, the use of the category of countries with centrally planned economies, and the consolidation, on the one hand, of groups A and C, and on the other, of groups B and D. The resulting tables might meet the requirements of the General Assembly, but they would not be enough in and of themselves. To represent each and every Member State adequately, it was necessary to use alphabetical lists, as had been done in the past.

43. On the basis of the very positive experience of the competitive examinations organized in Hungary in 1989, his country was willing to host one of the first series of national examinations for posts at the P-3 level planned for 1991. G-to-P examinations were a very important element in career development, and the intention of the Office of Human Resources Management to expand the scope of those examinations was commendable. However, exceptions to that system were not only contrary to paragraph 10 (a) of resolution 35/210, but also set a bad precedent and undermined the credibility of the system.

44. In the context of career development, it would be possible to establish a simple system to monitor the careers of persons appointed as a result of national competitive examinations in order to determine whether their higher qualifications led to a more successful career. Moreover, his delegation agreed that promotion from the entry levels to the middle levels should depend essentially on merit.

45. With respect to the administration of justice in the Secretariat, in view of the difficult circumstances imposed by budget cuts and for the purpose of improving staff morale, renewed attention should be given to the notion of instituting an office of ombudsman in the United Nations.

46. Mr. MOHAMMADI (Afghanistan) said that, although the balanced and equitable geographical distribution of United Nations staff was one of the fundamental principles of the Charter, there had not been enough improvement in that area to satisfy the interests of each Member State. It was necessary to bring appointments from unrepresented and underrepresented countries up to the required level, and special measures should be taken to that end.

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(Mr. Mohammadi, Afghanistan)

47. The most important elements of the reform of the Organization, which should be directed towards the complete eradication of the remnants of bureaucracy, were the establishment of a single administrative structure and the definition of responsibilities for each individual. However, the reform should not have negative consequences, such as reduced funding for necessary programmes.

48. His country complied unfailingly with the provisions regarding the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials. In the very delicate situation prevailing in Afghanistan, the competent authorities were doing their utmost to guarantee those privileges and immunities fully and to ensure the security of the staff of the United Nations system. At the same time, all staff members were under an obligation to refrain from abusing their international status to the detriment of the national interests of Member States. With a view to ensuring the security of all international organizations operating in Afghanistan, his Government, acting on the basis of irrefutable evidence and in strict compliance with the law, had put an end to the anti-government activities of locally recruited Afghan staff. However, it should be mentioned that, immediately following the declaration of the policy of national reconciliation, all such local staff had been released and some of them had joined the armed forces in order to complete their mandatory military service. At the present time, there was no one in custody who could be considered a staff member of the United Nations system. The names of the Afghan nationals listed in the documents submitted to the Committee should therefore be removed.

49. With respect to the advancement of women in the Secretariat, it should be pointed out that not only did women have the same ability as men, but also that in some areas they were even more effective, and that it was time to eradicate all discrimination on the basis of sex.

50. Mrs. CLIFF (United Kingdom) welcomed the participation of the Office of the Legal Counsel in the case mentioned in paragraph 20 of document A/C.5/45/10 concerning the difficulties that representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were experiencing in London in obtaining rating relief for their premises. She hoped that an agreement could be reached soon on the interpretation and implementation of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

51. Mr. DIPP GOMEZ (Dominican Republic) said that the competitive examination held in his country had been a positive experience and that his Government had provided all the necessary co-operation. Of the 30 candidates, four had been successful, and, according to table 4 of the report (A/45/541), two had apparently received appointments, one at the P-1 level and the other at the P-2 level. Since the desirable range for his country was between 3 and 14, he urged the Secretary-General to continue holding competitive examinations in order to achieve a just and balanced geographic distribution, offer young professionals in Member States a chance to become international civil servants, and eliminate the existing imbalances in the composition of the Secretariat. It should be pointed out that the developed countries, which had better facilities for professional and vocational training than the developing countries, were more heavily represented at most levels.

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(Mr. Dipp Gomez, Dominican Republic)

52. Paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/45/12 and paragraphs 18 and 19 of document A/C.5/45/19 referred to the system of secondment, which violated the basic principles of an independent international civil service and had been tested before the United Nations Administrative Tribunal. It limited the promotion of meritorious staff members and impeded mobility. Moreover, the terms "General Service level" and "Professional level" constituted value judgements. Training opportunities should be increased in order to make it easier to move from one category to the other. In the case of those staff members who had to wait too long at one level without any possibility of promotion, the waiting period should be reduced, especially for staff at the P-3 level.

53. Paragraph 7 of the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) mentioned the increase in the number of women. To reach the established target, it was necessary to offer incentives to women in developing and other underrepresented countries.

54. It was distressing to see, in documents A/C.5/45/10 and A/C.5/45/19, the long lists of staff members who had disappeared or been detained in various countries in violation of international principles and human rights. His country supported the recommendations in paragraph 30 of document A/C.5/45/19 aimed at remedying those obvious, flagrant injustices.

55. Mr. NASSER (Egypt) said that, according to the Secretary-General's report (A/45/541, para. 22), groupings of Member States were not compared among themselves in absolute terms but only in the context of their collective entitlements where representation in the Secretariat was concerned. His delegation believed that grouping Member States by seven major geographical regions, i.e. Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe (Eastern), Europe (Western), Latin America, Middle East, and North America and the Caribbean, which were the groupings used in technical assistance programmes, had served the Organization well for decades and was the best way to reflect the national and cultural composition of the Secretariat adequately. His delegation attached importance to retaining the Middle East as a separate entity.

56. In its resolution 42/220 A, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, whenever making appointments subject to geographical distribution, to make every effort to recruit nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. His delegation had hoped that the report would tell what criteria were currently used in determining which posts were subject to geographical distribution. He would be grateful if the Secretariat could provide that information. Such posts accounted for only 2,561 out of a total of 10,167 posts financed under the regular budget.

57. The General Assembly had frequently requested the Secretary-General to take every available measure to ensure, at the senior and policy-formulating levels of the Secretariat, the equitable representation of Member States, in particular of developing countries. In resolution 44/185, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to monitor closely the effects of the reduction of posts on

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(Mr. Nasser, Egypt)

geographical distribution, particularly at the senior levels, and to take appropriate measures to redress any imbalances. It must be noted, however, that during the period under review, the percentage of staff members from developing countries occupying posts subject to geographical distribution at the D-1 level and above had declined from 48.8 per cent in 1986 to 48.6 per cent in 1990 and that the percentage of those occupying posts at the D-2 level and above had fallen from 47.6 per cent to 43.1 per cent (A/45/541, annex I, table C). However, he was encouraged by the fact that the percentage of staff from Africa and the Middle East in posts subject to geographical distribution had increased (A/45/541, annex I, table E).

58. His delegation found the problem of organizational units with high vacancy rates, particularly the regional commissions, disturbing. General Assembly resolution 43/224 A requested the Secretary-General to give special attention to that matter, and the Secretary-General's report did refer to appointments made during the reporting period, but nothing was said about the current vacancy level in the regional commissions after those appointments had been made. He wanted the Secretariat to provide that information to the Committee; he particularly wished to know the percentage of vacancies at the Economic Commission for Africa and the measures taken or anticipated to correct that situation.

59. He was pleased to note that the overwhelming majority of Member States scrupulously respected the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, although some countries were having difficulties in that regard. He called upon all Member States to abide by the provisions of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies.

60. Mr. WILKINSON (United States of America) said that the Committee must be ever mindful of the importance of selecting and retaining staff who demonstrated the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity; in addition, a better balance between fixed-term and permanent staff must be achieved. The independence of the international civil service remained of vital concern if the Organization was to be truly efficient and effective. The role played by the Secretariat in the success of the Namibia mission and other special missions undertaken by the United Nations could not go unmentioned; the efforts of the staff and the enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication they had demonstrated in executing their responsibilities under frequently trying conditions must be applauded.

61. The continued increase in the number of arrests, detentions and abductions of staff members of the United Nations and the specialized agencies was a source of deep concern. More and more frequently, the rights and safety of staff members and their families were being violated. Staff serving in situations recognized as dangerous must not be further endangered by the possibility of arbitrary arrest or detention without due process. Member States must continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts to obtain the release of all United Nations staff currently under detention or reported missing and to urge all responsible

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

authorities to co-operate to that end. He was particularly concerned that immediate access to staff who had been arrested or detained was denied, that no explanation was given for their arrest or detention and that they were not given adequate medical care while in custody. He suggested that the use of independent medical teams to examine those staff members should be considered. The resources required for those such teams could come from appropriations under section 28 C (Medical and employee assistance) of the regular budget. Member States could not claim to be honouring their obligations to the Organization if they did not ensure that international civil servants were able to carry out their responsibilities. He therefore called on all Member States to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to mitigate and eliminate those serious problems.

62. On the subject of official and private travel of United Nations officials within the United States, he stressed that at no time had his country impeded the official travel of Secretariat officials. In fact, freedom of travel of staff members on official business had always been guaranteed and would remain so. In addition, the United States Government had lifted restrictions on private travel within the United States by staff members of Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish nationality and their dependants. In the light of the changing political environment, his Government would continue to review the situation. It was important to note that the provisions governing private travel did not restrict the official travel of international civil servants or impede their work in any way. His Government was committed to continuing to honour its obligations as the host country to the United Nations. The controls imposed on personal travel did not violate any pertinent international agreements, since official travel was not affected in any way. Consequently, there could be no contradiction or conflict between the obligations of the United States to the United Nations and his country's right to safeguard national security. It should also be noted that waivers of travel restrictions had been authorized to accommodate staff members residing outside the 25-mile radius. Personal travel for medical and other humanitarian purposes was also authorized.

63. The United States welcomed the decision by the Soviet Union to allow its nationals to serve in the Secretariat on long-term and permanent contracts. His delegation had long believed that such contracts must be the rule and that exceptions should be granted on a limited basis.

64. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on secondment from government service (A/C.5/45/12), his delegation believed that secondment could and should be used to the advantage of the United Nations system so long as it was applied on a limited basis. Secondment could be a means of attracting high-calibre staff when "state-of-the-art" technical skills were needed or when temporary posts had to be filled. However, the exclusive or extensive use of secondment undermined the independence of the international civil service. It was necessary to define clearly the conditions governing secondment so that none of the parties - the staff member, the Government concerned or the United Nations - had any question as to the nature of a contract, its scope and limitations before it was issued. His delegation supported the formal recognition of secondment status through a written

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

agreement among the parties concerned, and he urged the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures without delay.

65. Professional posts did not belong to any Member State and should not be treated as if they did. If the paramount consideration in the selection of staff was the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, then the Secretary-General must have the ability to select nationals of Member States other than those whose nationals were occupying specific posts. Accordingly, the provision of General Assembly resolution 35/210 which had permitted the "inheritance" of posts by countries whose nationals served primarily on fixed-term contracts was no longer needed, for some Member States had decided to permit their staff to accept permanent contracts and that same resolution provided that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of Member States. Any review of Secretariat personnel procedures should include an examination of the staff recruitment and promotion process. In that connection his delegation supported the compulsory use of competitive examinations for recruitment at the P-1, P-2 and P-3 levels and of internal examinations for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category. It also believed that the application of the examination process would not adversely affect the promotion prospects of staff members eligible for promotion from the P-2 to the P-3 level. Selection of candidates for all posts not filled by competitive examination must be based on objective and clear criteria. The recruitment and promotion process must be made less opaque, and standard procedures must be followed for the filling of all vacant posts.

66. With regard to promotion and career prospects, staff members must be shown that their satisfactory performance was important and could lead to better opportunities within the United Nations. His delegation would not support any proposal to grant promotions based solely on longevity in grade. In order to increase promotion possibilities, further study should be made of the post classification standards, with a view to identifying existing career paths. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of restructuring some posts to include career ladders with a significant increase in responsibilities. In such cases, an incumbent would not necessarily have to compete in order to be promoted, but his promotion would be based on meritorious performance and qualification for the post. In addition, greater attention must be paid to developing a systematic rotation and mobility scheme within a career development plan.

67. In order to ensure the optimum use of the Organization's human and financial resources, it was important to have a comprehensive training and retraining programme, planned and executed within the constraints of available resources. Such training programmes must be geared to the need to reduce the Organization's size and deliver improved services to Member States. Nevertheless, training programmes must not be used as a substitute for hiring particularly competent and qualified individuals.

68. For a number of years resources had been allocated from the regular budget to give financial support to the Moscow and Beijing language institutes. The reason

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

was that Russian and Chinese language staff were recruited by secondment, since the United Nations could not provide the necessary training for staff members who were rotated on short-term contracts. In view of the recent announcement by the Soviet Government and of the decision of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal concerning Chinese language staff, it would appear that it was no longer necessary to continue that budget arrangement. Furthermore, the representative of China had pointed out that there were several dozen graduates of the language training programme in Beijing with no place to go. His delegation therefore proposed that consideration should be given to the termination of funding from the regular budget for the language training programmes in Moscow and Beijing and that the resources should be redeployed to the broader training programme.

69. His delegation noted the Secretary-General's decision to extend the payment of the language allowance established under rule 103.6 of the Staff Rules to staff in the Trades and Crafts category, but it questioned the need to pay a language allowance to such staff.

70. With respect to the representation of women in the Secretariat, although there had been a slight overall increase in the number of women in the past year, it had occurred only at the P-1 to P-4 levels and there had been a decrease at most of the senior levels. However, it was encouraging to hear that additional female candidates were in the recruitment pipeline, for they would bring the representation of women closer to the target of 30 per cent by the end of 1990. The annual report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat should include a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the main obstacles to the improvement of the status of women in the Organization, together with proposals for overcoming such obstacles. Improved statistics alone would not necessarily bring about an improved status for women in the United Nations. Efforts must be made to find more women applicants who met the standards of competence, efficiency and integrity required by the United Nations, to improve the training and career development of women, and to integrate women fully at the senior levels. However, the suggestion by the Staff Union with respect to extensive advertising campaigns should be viewed with caution, for such campaigns did not seem adequate to the purpose.

71. The United States had become increasingly concerned about the role of the Staff Union in decisions on pay and benefits. In the spring of 1990 there had been a week of staff strikes, and now there were rumours of a possible strike if the Fifth Committee opposed the Secretary-General's decision concerning General Service salaries. The Organization could not function effectively if it lived under the constant threat of job action whenever the decisions of Member States did not please the staff. His country firmly believed that the Staff Union should not be permitted to disrupt the work of the Organization, and the Staff Rules and Regulations must be strengthened in order to prevent that happening. Interruptions in the work of the Organization and strikes could have serious consequences, especially for those whose welfare and security depended on United Nations services or actions. The provisions of rule 105.1 of the Staff Rules were relevant in that connection, and it should be made clear whether in cases in question leave had been

(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

authorized for such activities. If not, the time lost by staff members participating in such actions should be deducted from their annual leave or future salary payments. The study undertaken by the Secretariat on the financing of the activities of the Staff Union from the regular budget could serve as a basis for the submission to the General Assembly of annual reports on the activities of the Staff Union financed from that source and the subsequent approval by the General Assembly of smaller budgets for the Staff Union. The Joint Inspection Unit should also make a study of relations between management and staff.

72. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica) said that her delegation was very concerned about the underrepresentation of Costa Rica in posts subject to geographical distribution. Although her country's desirable range was 2 to 14 Professional posts and its mid-point was 7.17, there were only three Professional staff members of Costa Rican nationality. That was not due to a shortage of qualified candidates for Professional posts, even posts at the higher levels, for there had been cases in which highly qualified Costa Ricans had applied for posts at those levels but had received no reply. The reasons for the persistence of such a discriminatory situation must be stated.

73. With regard to the recruitment of women from the developing countries, table 1 in document A/45/548 showed that the percentage of women at the higher levels from D-1 to Under-Secretary-General had declined between 1988 and 1990. In the year ended 30 June 1988 73 women had been recruited, but almost 70 per cent of those new staff members had joined at the P-1 and P-2 levels. That indicated a policy of recruiting women at the lower levels for the sole purpose of achieving the target percentage, without any improvement in the status of women. Moreover, 62 per cent of the new women recruits were from developed countries. A special appeal must be made to the departments and offices classified in groups III and IV whose proportion of female staff was below 25 per cent. It was essential for drastic action to be taken to correct the imbalance between the numbers of men and women recruits. Lastly, her delegation could not understand the appeal for increased efforts to have more women candidates presented for higher-level posts, contained in paragraph 15 of document A/45/548, for such efforts by Costa Rica, which had no female staff members in the Secretariat, had proved fruitless. It was impossible to understand why the reasons for such a situation had not been stated.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
23rd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 6 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 concerning agenda item 29 (A/45/7/Add.2 and Add.4; A/C.5/45/2 and A/C.5/45/25 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. SUMI (Japan) said that his Government was determined to maintain its support for the good offices functions of the Secretary-General specified in draft resolution A/45/L.3. On the other hand, he trusted that the Secretary-General would provide information on the points raised by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraphs 5 and 7 of its report (A/45/7/Add.4) to the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly in the course of 1991 and, in particular, on the requirements of the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan for local premises and services, as well as the actual support and accommodation provided by the host Governments, bearing in mind the staff resources required to achieve the objectives of the mission.

2. His delegation was concerned that the Secretary-General should continue to view as extraordinary in nature all additional requirements for activities relating to the maintenance of peace and security, which would therefore continue to be treated in accordance with established procedures and under the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules (A/C.5/45/25, paras. 17 and 18). That approach was merely a modus vivendi and should not in any way prejudice efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution to the problem of all additional expenditures which, as noted in annex I, paragraph 10, of General Assembly resolution 41/213, should be accommodated within the overall level of the budget, either as a reserve or as a separate part of the contingency fund. The Assembly should therefore establish an appropriate mechanism for the appropriation of additional requirements to cover extraordinary expenses.

3. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) had no objection to the activities provided for under draft resolution A/45/L.3, although his delegation had traditionally expressed reservations concerning the form in which such estimates were presented, as well as their substance. The major difficulty had always related to the rental and operation of aircraft. The estimates for 1991, although lower than the initial estimates for 1990, exceeded the revised estimates for that year. He was not sure that so large an item of expenditure as that proposed could really be justified. His delegation therefore endorsed the related comment made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/45/7/Add.4).

4. Following a procedural discussion in which Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Mr. KALBITZER (Germany), Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) and Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) took part, the CHAIRMAN said that the meeting should be suspended for consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.05 p.m.

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5. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, based on the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.3 (A/C.5/45/25 and Corr.1) and on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/45/7/Add.4), the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/45/L.3, an additional non-recurrent appropriation of $6,150,000 would be required under section 1 of the programme budget for 1990-1991, without recourse to the contingency fund, as well as an additional appropriation of $336,100 under section 31 (Staff assessment), to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

6. It was so decided.

7. Mr. TAEB (Afghanistan) said that his Government had provided the local support and services required for the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) until the termination of its mandate, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Agreements of 14 April 1988. The Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan had been established at the beginning of 1990 in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General under pertinent General Assembly resolutions. His Government had been asked to continue providing local support and services to that Office, and he was pleased to report that the request had been granted. Consequently, his Government was providing support and services to the Office of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the difference between its size and that of UNGOMAP, and wished to assure the Committee, the Secretariat and the Secretary-General in particular that it would continue to do so in the future.

AGENDA ITEM 117: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/226, A/45/370 and A/45/617)

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1 and A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (continued)

8. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that every organization, particularly those with huge bureaucratic staffs, tended to favour the conservation of old structures rather than the introduction of new ones. In the case of the United Nations, everything possible must be done to create a flexible administrative structure which could respond rapidly to changes. The process of reform provided for under General Assembly resolution 41/213 must be kept in motion. Accordingly, the limited resources available to the United Nations must be focused on priority activities; outdated programmes should be abolished; and the corresponding administrative structures should be eliminated. In that connection, he proposed that the Secretary-General should, in the introduction to his budget proposals, give a brief description of reform measures taken or planned, together with suggestions for necessary legislative action.

(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

9. He wondered whether, in its present form, the medium-term plan was consistent with established criteria. Given his own country's mostly negative experience in terms of medium-term planning, it was unlikely that a detailed plan would allow the Organization to react better to the rapidly changing needs of Member States. On the contrary, a rigid and detailed plan tended to conserve outdated programmes and created contradictions when unforeseen problems arose. Programme performance could be improved considerably by strengthening and harmonizing the work of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), without the adoption of a complicated medium-term plan.

10. The Organization must know what it was about when setting priorities. Priority did not mean merely a preferential rating for the allocation of resources but also increased attention, which in the present circumstances was perhaps more important. His delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the competent reviewing bodies should provide specific guidelines to the Secretary-General, including recommendations on priorities (A/45/617, para. 8). As indicated in the introduction to the proposed plan, the highest priority would be peace-making and peace-keeping activities and the enhancement of the well-being of all the peoples of the world (A/45/6 (Introduction), para. 39). But the well-being of the peoples of the world must not be described only in material terms but also in terms of the enjoyment of human rights. It was therefore difficult to accept the omission of the promotion and protection of human rights from the priorities listed in the programme budget outline for the biennium 1992-1993. Other delegations had already voiced that concern, so that a way must be found to make good the omission. Furthermore, the zero-growth referred to in the outline was of political rather than programme-planning significance. With regard to the mathematical operations carried out with respect to the non-recurrent items, it must be acknowledged that, zero-growth or not, the Member States had to pay the cost of those items as well.

11. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that efficiency was a relative concept connected with the result obtained from the use of a given quantity of resources. A reduction of resources, for example a staff cut or a freeze on budget growth, was not in itself a sign of efficiency unless it could be demonstrated that an equal or greater product had been obtained. Several delegations had pointed out that the defective evaluation machinery still impeded an accurate determination as to whether the products obtained by the United Nations system were tending to increase or decline. In view of the new challenges facing the Organization, an absolute increase in resources would seem reasonable, but there were no reliable indicators of efficiency.

12. Another matter of crucial importance was a suitable policy for the selection of the Organization's managerial staff. Without prejudice to the usefulness and urgency of the structural reorganization, in the short term it was essential to carry out the recommendations approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 that objective technical criteria should be applied to personnel selection and that both the monopoly of posts by certain countries and the indefinite occupation of high-level posts should be avoided. Experience showed that the

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(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

administrative efficiency of any team of workers depended largely on the abilities of its managers. In order to achieve excellence in that respect it was necessary to avoid placing the selected staff members under the pressure of the possibility of reappointment. The intellectual freedom which a prohibition on their reappointment would give to the most senior managerial staff, including staff in the specialized agencies, would substantially enhance their performance. That could mean modification of their terms of office and their mandatory separation from the system for a reasonable period once they had served their terms. Similar criteria could be applied to top-level officials, such as those at the Assistant Secretary-General and higher levels, whose appointment should be for a fixed term and non-renewable, in order to ensure a healthy renewal of the Organization's personnel.

13. The recent joint meeting of CPC and ACC had shown that a technical body was needed to evaluate the large number of proposals arising from resolution 41/213. Only thus would it be possible to submit to the General Assembly the proposals which were most viable and most consistent with the established goals. In order to carry out that task CPC might establish a group of experts, including as far as possible experts from non-governmental organizations and having specific terms of reference.

14. The proposed medium-term plan gave rise to several questions which confirmed the need for such a technical body. The presentation of the proposed plan no doubt represented a degree of methodological progress but, despite the many revisions to which it had been subjected, doubts remained as to the mechanisms for translating the priorities set in the plan into budget decisions.

15. With regard to programme 1 of the proposed medium-term plan (A/45/6 (Prog. 1)), his delegation endorsed the reservations stated by the delegations of Cuba and Venezuela concerning the inclusion of subprogramme 1 (Good offices and peace-making) in programme 1 (Good offices and peace-making, peace-keeping, research and the collection of information). The subprogramme required a specific legal mandate stemming unambiguously from the Charter of the United Nations. Article 99 of the Charter provided a clear guideline for action by the Secretary-General when it was necessary to act to maintain international peace and security. In contrast, peace-making activities derived from concepts which were still being developed and still lacked universal acceptance. The establishment of an independent subprogramme for peace-making ought to be studied in greater detail by the competent political organs. The Secretary-General's initiatives would then have a clearer legal as well as budgetary basis.

16. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that in the process of drafting and approving the medium-term plan there was a need for broader participation by Member States at the stage of prior consultations. It was obvious that some very important programmes, including some with controversial content, had not been considered by the competent organs. That was true of programme 1 of the proposed medium-term plan which, although concerned with peace-keeping activities, had not been examined by the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations. Her delegation wished to know why

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(Ms. Goicochea, Cuba)

that had happened and also requested information from the Secretariat about all the programmes which had not been the subject of consultations with the competent organs. The Fifth Committee, which was a technical body, had before it programmes of a clearly political nature which had not been considered by the competent organs. The Committee could not of course be expected to take any decisions in the matter until it had the opinions of such organs, opinions which would constitute the legislative mandates.

17. Cuba fully agreed with the view stated by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 10 of its report that the format of the consolidated summary of comments and recommendations on the draft introduction to the medium-term plan (A/45/279) did not facilitate consideration of the plan. The consolidated summary should be improved in the future, both in form and content.

18. The opinions of Member States had not always been taken into account in the formulation of the proposed medium-term plan. Moreover, some of the Secretariat's proposals were not in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. The introduction to the proposed plan showed an outlook in line with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization and with documents submitted by some Member States but out of line with the provisions of regulation 3.7, paragraph (b), of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. Member States must bear some of the responsibility for the situation, since on many occasions, and especially in the reports of CPC, the use of such formulas as "several delegations" did not clearly express the majority view. Perhaps that situation ought to be corrected in the future.

19. It was regrettable that the Secretariat, in breach of the relevant regulations, had made programme proposals in respect of certain programmes for which there was no mandate, such as the proposals relating to the programme on peace-making activities. Acceptance of the argument that the authority for those programmes was provided by the view held by the Secretary-General and some Member States appeared to negate the validity of General Assembly resolution 37/234, in which the Regulations Governing Programme Planning were adopted, and the statement in paragraph 1 (d) of the preamble to the Regulations, concerning the establishment of objectives politically acceptable to Member States as a whole. Careful thought was needed if the principles underlying the programming and budgeting process were to be upheld.

20. Attention should also be drawn to the obvious imbalance in the introduction to the plan, in which insufficient emphasis was placed on components such as the elimination of *apartheid*, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the economic and social problems of the developing countries. It would therefore also be necessary to consider carefully the priorities proposed by the Secretary-General before their final approval. Similarly, Cuba regretted that there was no indication in the draft medium-term plan of the resources that would be needed, in spite of the provisions on that matter in the regulations. The Secretariat should make available to members an official document providing additional information.

(Ms. Goicochea, Cuba)

21. With regard to programme performance, the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/218 and Add.1) did not give a clear and objective picture of the way in which programmes had been implemented. Improvements should be made in the presentation of such reports. In addition, it was not possible to support the recommendation by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 23 of its report (A/45/617) that issuance of programme performance reports should be suspended pending a resolution of the underlying methodological difficulties. Member States must be kept informed about programme performance in view of the persistent financial crisis of the United Nations. In that connection, Cuba endorsed the conclusions and recommendations made by CPC in paragraphs 334 to 341 of the report on its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part I)). It would also be useful for the programme performance report for the biennium 1988-1989 to be supplemented by a full-scale evaluation of performance.

22. Cuba took note of the proposed structure for the new medium-term plan and requested the Secretariat to make available to the Fifth Committee a conference room paper explaining the changes as compared with the previous structure and setting out the reasons to justify such changes.

23. With regard to consideration of the draft medium-term plan, the late submission of documents to CPC had made it difficult for specialists from the Member States to examine the various programmes in detail. Moreover, there had been serious difficulties in securing support for CPC's conclusions in the Third Committee of the Economic and Social Council, support having been granted on the understanding that the plan would be subject to future reviews by the General Assembly. For that reason, it was hoped that the Fifth Committee was not being expected to accept certain components on which the Member States would give their views when analysing the individual programmes, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning.

Major programme IV. International economic co-operation for development (continued)

24. Mr. MEDINA (Israel), referring to the activities for assisting the Palestinian people which were included in programme 15 of the draft medium-term plan (A/45/6 (Prog. 15)), said that there was no need to continue to accumulate surveys by UNCTAD and other United Nations bodies on different aspects of development in the Israeli-administered territories of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district. Moreover, Israel was not unaware of the political aims behind such surveys, namely, the surreptitious introduction of elements pertaining to the political future of the region rather than to the economic future of its inhabitants. Israel would not approve resolutions and reports containing such provocative elements. Any study of projects intended for the Palestinians must be carried out in co-operation with Israel, which, in accordance with international law, bore sole responsibility for the well-being of the population. Israel had done its utmost in the prevailing situation to ensure the well-being of the Palestinian population in the administered territories and would continue to do so until a political settlement was reached.

Major programme VII. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs

Major programme VIII. Public information

25. Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination), introducing the part of CPC's report relating to major programme VII (Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs) (A/45/16 (Part I), paras. 284 to 319), said with regard to programme 35 (Promotion and protection of human rights) that CPC had recommended approval of the programme as proposed by the Secretary-General. In contrast, CPC had recommended that programme 36 (International protection of and assistance to refugees) should be approved with some modifications, including reference to the legislative authority for certain subprogrammes and to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. With regard to programme 37 (Disaster relief and mitigation, and special emergency programmes), the Committee had stressed the need to ensure effective system-wide co-ordination and to utilize fully the designated focal points at the country level; it had recommended that high priority should be given to subprogramme 4 (Special emergency programmes); and had agreed on the need to incorporate in the programme the activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

26. With regard to major programme VIII (Public information), referred to in paragraphs 320 to 322 of the report, CPC recommended that its single programme should be approved, on the understanding that the necessary measures should be adopted to take into account the Committee's conclusions and implement its recommendations.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 7 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. MUSTONEN (Vice-Chairman) (Finland)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT (continued)

(b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

(c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Mustonen (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 119: PROGRAMME PLANNING (*continued*) (A/45/6, A/45/16 (Part I) and Add.1, A/45/16 (Part II), A/45/204, A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, A/45/279 and A/45/617; A/C.5/45/CRP.1)

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (*continued*)

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), commenting on various points that had been raised regarding major programmes of the proposed medium-term plan, said that, when the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) had examined the proposed plan at the first part of its thirtieth session, the Secretariat had provided information about the resources of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 and the corresponding resources in the proposed medium-term plan. If the Committee so wished, that information could be made available again as a conference room paper. A paper had also been submitted to CPC outlining the relationship between the structure of the proposed medium-term plan, and the existing plan, and that, too, could be made available to the Fifth Committee.

2. A somewhat more complex question had been raised by the Chairman of CPC at the previous meeting in connection with programme 31, Regional co-operation for development in Asia and the Pacific. The question of priorities had not been decided by CPC when it had discussed that programme in May, because the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had been unable to meet to review the programme for itself and make its views on priorities known to CPC. The Secretary-General's proposal at that time had been that highest priority should be assigned to two subprogrammes. CPC had reverted to the matter at the second part of its session in September and had then been told that ESCAP suggested that there should be nine priority subprogrammes. As the Chairman of CPC had noted, CPC had decided to refer the matter to the Fifth Committee for a decision. The difficulties of the consultative process were well known; it was frequently difficult for subsidiary bodies to make proposals about priorities. For the consideration of the Fifth Committee, the Secretariat would like to propose a smaller number of priorities, six subprogrammes instead of the nine proposed by ESCAP. If the Committee agreed, he would provide another conference room paper containing information on the priorities suggested by the Secretary-General to CPC in May, those subsequently recommended by ESCAP, and the Secretary-General's current proposal. He hoped that the additional information would enable the Committee to reach a decision in that regard.

Major programme VII. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs (*continued*)

3. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), commenting on programme 35, commended the Secretariat for having established appropriate priorities among the subprogrammes. The document before the Committee (A/45/6 (Prog. 35)) explained the challenges to be

faced over the next six years in reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights. He urged delegations to give meaning to that important programme by ensuring that the Secretariat had the resources to carry it out from the beginning of the medium-term plan.

4. As the Secretariat pointed out (para. 35.43), the question of standard-setting in human rights involved a number of interrelated and complex issues. It was most important for the betterment of the rights of individuals that all the elements of subprogramme 1 should be implemented over the term of the plan. The Secretariat had been given responsibility for encouraging Member States to participate in the treaties and instruments currently in force, to which the new Convention on the Rights of the Child was now added, and it should also be in a position to respond positively to petitions or appeals to the United Nations. If a "culture of human rights" was to be built, the United Nations must have the resources to ensure that individuals had the opportunity to be heard. The Secretariat bodies active in the field were particularly well placed to provide advisory service to Governments where there was a need to improve national laws and provide the training necessary to develop a universal culture of human rights.

5. At the first part of its thirtieth session, CPC had fully endorsed programme 35 as set out in the proposed medium-term plan. His delegation was, however, disturbed by some of the discussion that had taken place in CPC. The Secretary-General had identified the protection of human rights as a primary area for action over the next few years, and the programme must be given the necessary resources. In the CPC analysis of priorities for the next biennium, it had not received the proper emphasis. Since delegates represented Governments, there seemed to be a tendency to give priority to programmes that benefited the public sector. Human rights were, however, a prime objective of the Charter; they belonged to individuals and the United Nations had a duty to protect them. It would be very short-sighted of the General Assembly and of the Fifth Committee to postpone the implementation of that very important programme until the second biennium of the medium-term plan.

6. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that his country attached the utmost importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. As a member of the Council of Europe, it had undertaken to comply fully with European human rights standards. With regard to subprogramme 2 of programme 35, Elimination and prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups, he said that the activities under that subprogramme were defined in the Charter as one of the major purposes of the United Nations; they were therefore deserving of the highest priority. Hungary had made a proposal to that effect in CPC and no objection had been raised. Attributing priority to subprogramme 2 did not mean giving it more resources but rather giving it enhanced attention and making sure that no activities were left unimplemented.

7. In connection with the Secretariat's proposed course of action he noted that paragraph 35.24 dealt with two basically different questions: the rights of migrant workers and the rights of minorities. In his delegation's view, there

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(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

should have been two separate paragraphs. It also had difficulties with the wording of that paragraph. First, the reference to a search for "peaceful" solutions to minority problems implied that minority problems always resulted in violence, and his delegation would therefore prefer to say simply "the search for solutions to minority problems". Second, the last sentence of the paragraph also caused difficulties with its reference to "religion or belief". Problems could arise out of ethnic differences, patterns of living and so on, and he did not feel it was appropriate to stress problems of religion or belief as though they were separate from other minority issues.

8. In conclusion, he supported the view expressed by Canada that human rights should be given high priority during the first two years of the medium-term plan.

9. Mr. TANG Guangting (China) said that the numerous provisions in the United Nations Charter regarding respect for human rights should serve as guidelines for the discussion of programme 35. His delegation wished to emphasize that, owing to the diversity of political, economic and social systems, ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, concepts and perceptions of human rights differed and it was important, therefore, that the programme should reflect all points of view and not take a particular concept of human rights as the internationally recognized norm to the exclusion of others.

10. In the final analysis, the question of human rights was a social one and was linked to social development. During the discussion of the proposed medium-term plan in CPC in May 1990, his delegation had proposed that major programmes VII and V should be combined, and it wished to reiterate that proposal.

11. In the study and discussion of matters relating to human rights, emphasis should be placed on universal questions that demanded urgent solutions, in other words, on the practical problems faced by many of the people of the developing countries with respect to their right to economic and social development, self-determination and independence. Those were questions of vital interest to the people of the developing countries and should be given due priority in the medium-term plan.

12. It had been agreed that, in the discussion of the proposed medium-term plan, the Committee should take steps to consult other Main Committees. His delegation believed that that procedure was desirable and hoped that, when the programme in question was finalized, the views and suggestions of other bodies concerned would be taken into account.

13. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that major programme VII, and in particular programme 35, dealt with programmes that were already sufficiently mandated but must still be financed. It was clear that the authority of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to manage the programme came from the Charter. The role of the Fifth Committee was to ensure that mandated programmes were properly financed and that sufficient resources were allocated to ensure their implementation.

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Major programme IX. Conference services

Major programme X. Administrative services

14. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that major programmes IX and X presented plans and programmes for support services. Between them, the two major programmes comprised six programmes, which, in the regular budget, corresponded largely to sections 28 and 29.

15. The structure of the programmes was more or less similar to that of substantive programmes; they contained sections relating to general orientation, overall strategy and an outline of subprogramme structure and priorities. Not all subprogrammes in the two major programmes had been accorded priority, and, where priority was identified, the rationale and criteria were not explained. For example, in programme 40 it was not clear why priority was given to staff-management relations over internal audit services.

16. Over the years, the Advisory Committee had had considerable difficulties with major programmes IX and X. In the first place, it was questionable whether those two programmes should be presented in the same format as that used for substantive activities. The Advisory Committee had often found the narratives in the sections on orientation and overall strategy useless, since, in many instances, they duplicated the subprogramme narratives. There were also many instances of similar narratives appearing under different programmes, so that it was very difficult to know under which programme an objective was being planned and programmed.

17. The quality of the two major programmes needed to be improved considerably, particularly as they covered a sector which used the bulk of the programme budget's resources. In its report (A/45/617), the Advisory Committee called for a thorough re-examination of the presentation of the medium-term plan and of major programmes IX and X in particular. It also drew attention to an apparent contradiction in one of the regulations governing planning and programming: whereas regulation 3.6 stated that the plan should be presented by programme and objective, rule 103.6 stated that the plan for servicing activities should be presented by organizational unit. As the Advisory Committee pointed out, that led to repetitiveness and duplication in narratives, verbosity and the tendency to produce long texts, all of which reduced the plan's usefulness. Another result had been that, wherever organizational units had been reshuffled, there had been a rush to produce revisions of the medium-term plan even when the reshuffle did not affect the programmes being implemented.

18. The Advisory Committee recognized that considerable progress had been achieved in streamlining the plan and intensifying consultations with Member States. Much needed to be done, however, and the Committee had indicated those areas in which further progress might be sought. In addition, the Committee was of the view that top management should take more interest in providing the necessary leadership in the planning and programming process. Subject to his comments and those in the report of the Advisory Committee (A/45/617, paras. 2-13) the General Assembly was requested to approve major programmes IX and X.

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19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would revert to the review of the proposed medium-term plan after receiving the comments of the other Main Committees on the various major programmes.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/45/541 and A/45/548; A/C.5/45/3, A/C.5/45/10 and Corr.1, A/C.5/45/11, A/C.5/45/12, A/C.5/45/18 and A/C.5/45/19)

(a) COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT (continued)

(b) RESPECT FOR THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

(c) OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued)

20. Mr. KRYZHANIVSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that positive changes designed to enhance the role and authority of the United Nations in contemporary international relations deserved every support. The increasing practice of adopting decisions by consensus showed that it had become easier for Member States to find common language when devising strategies for action within the framework of the Organization. However, consensus on personnel questions required the agreement of the Administration and the Secretariat as a whole in order to ensure that intergovernmental decisions were implemented in the most effective manner. The improved administrative and financial functioning of the Organization depended on the development of a coherent and purposeful staff policy, based on the principles set forth in Article 101 of the Charter. In that context, the reductions in the numbers of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States constituted a step in the right direction.

21. His delegation favoured a further strengthening of the role of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), which should refine methods and elaborate clear criteria for the recruitment and promotion of competent high-quality staff. It looked forward to further fruitful co-operation with the corresponding services of the Secretariat in addressing problems relating to his country's representation, including its still inadequate qualitative level. For its part, his country was continuing to train staff suitable for employment in the international civil service both on a long-term and, where necessary, on a permanent basis. Aware that the major criteria for recruitment on permanent contracts must be the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, his delegation continued to believe that maximum flexibility in staff policies would be ensured by a reasonable mixture of fixed-term and permanent contracts. On the question of secondment, his delegation basically shared the views of the Secretary-General, as expressed in document A/C.5/45/12. Regulation of the system of secondment would help to strengthen guarantees of the legal status of staff recruited in that manner, thus fulfilling the real intentions of the procedure.

22. The practice of recruiting staff at the P-1 and P-2 levels through national competitive examinations should be expanded, particularly with respect to unrepresented and underrepresented States. Such examinations were an effective

(Mr. Kryzhanivsky, Ukrainian SSR)

means of injecting new blood, in the shape of talented young people, into the Organization. His delegation was prepared to discuss the question of organizing such examinations in the Ukrainian SSR and to offer qualified candidates for recruitment at the P-3 level, with a view to fulfilling the provisions of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 41/206 A.

23. The Secretary-General's report on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) showed that measures designed to fulfil the 30 per cent target for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 31 December 1990 had yielded positive results. Nevertheless, protracted and persistent efforts were still required to ensure the equitable representation of women, including their representation in high-level posts. While bearing in mind the complications arising from the traditional role of women in the family and society, his country would continue to support the efforts of qualified women to secure employment in international organizations. It therefore supported in principle the proposal whereby the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution would increase by 1 per cent each year after the achievement of the 30 per cent target, on the understanding that measures in that connection would not conflict with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

24. While affirming the prerogatives of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer, his delegation believed that there was a need further to increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat. The work of staff members, including nationals of his country, in Namibia had demonstrated the existing potential and high professionalism of the international civil service. The tasks before the Organization must be complemented by a modern flexible staff policy based on the principles embodied in the Charter, with due regard for the legitimate interests of Member States. In that connection, attention should be given to the proposals to enhance the system of career development made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, including his suggestion concerning personal promotion.

25. Ms. RODSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf also of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, said that the Nordic countries thought that many of the proposals and ideas contained in the statement made at a previous meeting on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand deserved thorough consideration by the Committee.

26. Where the composition of the Secretariat was concerned, great importance should be attached to the objective selection of the best-qualified candidates; the decision by the Secretariat to introduce national competitive examinations at the P-3 level, as requested by the General Assembly, was therefore welcome. In contrast, the number of exceptions to the principle of recruitment by examination at the P-2 level was worrying; there should be no exceptions with regard either to external recruitment or to internal promotion.

27. As for the proportion of women in the Secretariat, it was regrettable that the target of 30 per cent for women in posts subject to geographical distribution would not be met by the end of 1990. Despite the improvements indicated in the

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(Ms. Rodsmoen, Norway)

Secretary-General's report (A/45/548), the pace of progress was too slow and the tradition of recruiting women at the lower levels persisted, while the number of women at the D-1 and P-5 levels had in fact decreased. It was of paramount concern to the Nordic countries that the next agreed target of 35 per cent for the representation of women by 1995 should be achieved.

28. The Secretariat's initiative regarding the establishment of focal points for women in the permanent missions was welcome, and those missions which had not yet responded to the invitation should do so. It was important to nominate senior officers to that assignment, both in the Secretariat and in the missions.

29. Increased efforts must be made, both by Member States and by the Secretariat, to end the underrepresentation of women from Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Member States must encourage women to seek employment at all levels in the Secretariat, and the Secretary-General should continue his efforts to secure the necessary changes in that area, for the United Nations should serve as an example in providing equal opportunities for both sexes.

30. The Legal Counsel's description of the situation in many States with regard to the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system was alarming and unacceptable to the Nordic countries. They were particularly concerned about the continuing arrests, detentions and abductions in the Middle East, where the number of detained and arrested staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remained at the same high level as in previous years. UNRWA had also continued to encounter difficulties in the movement of staff into and out of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Nordic countries fully supported the efforts made in that connection by the Secretary-General, the executive heads of the organizations concerned and other officials, and they commended the United Nations Security Co-ordinator and his staff. Violations of the privileges and immunities in question could lead to a situation in which it was impossible for the United Nations to operate. The Nordic countries therefore appealed most strongly to the Governments concerned to live up to their international obligations.

31. Mr. MGBOKWERE (Nigeria) said that the Organization's capacity to respond to the new challenges of years to come would increasingly depend on its ability to secure and retain the services of staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, making the consideration of personnel questions ever more crucial. Noting the reductions in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States over the past year, his delegation urged that efforts be made to reduce those numbers still further and welcomed the assurances that an active and systematic recruitment policy would be conducted with a view to identifying high-quality candidates, particularly from those countries. In that connection, special attention should be paid to the developing countries. The continuing decline in the representation of developing countries in higher-level and upper-echelon posts highlighted the need for the Secretariat to bear in mind that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State or group of States.

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(Mr. Mgbokwere, Nigeria)

32. His delegation appreciated the considerable efforts made by the Secretariat to reach the 30 per cent target for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 31 December 1990 and welcomed the special emergency measures taken in that connection. It regretted, however, that the percentage of women from African countries was still far below that target. Additional steps should be taken to increase their representation, including action pursuant to the proposal by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management that Member States should work with the Secretariat to fill most of the posts subject to geographical distribution which would fall vacant during 1991 with qualified women.

33. His delegation welcomed the renewed attention to career development, particularly for staff in the General Service category, in such areas as office automation, language skills and the training and retraining of staff in their substantial areas of specialization. It also welcomed the new programme allowing staff at certain offices away from Headquarters to attend universities and hoped that the programme would be continued and expanded. As for career prospects, there was great merit in the Assistant Secretary-General's proposal whereby promotion between certain levels might be based on merit and seniority in grade even when a post at a higher level was not immediately available. While supporting the main thrust of the proposal, his delegation wished to know the number of staff involved, as well as the financial implications. Examinations for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category should continue.

34. The concerns expressed by staff members with respect to their welfare, career prospects and privileges and immunities, as reflected in document A/C.5/45/19, were valid. It was imperative that Member States give due attention to ways and means by which the Organization could maintain a highly efficient staff that was both properly motivated and well managed. His delegation therefore strongly supported effective measures to enhance their remuneration and career prospects, and to protect their privileges and immunities. The staff representatives' proposal that effective measures should be taken to ensure proper control and management of work contracted to outside firms also deserved serious attention.

35. Mr. DINU (Romania) said that his delegation took a special interest in staff administration. The need to preserve and strengthen the international character of the Organization as a whole underscored the importance of recruitment policies. The reduction in the number of underrepresented and unrepresented Member States was a particularly commendable achievement at a time when the Organization's resources had been under strain.

36. Although Romania remained among the countries which were underrepresented in the Secretariat, there was hope that that situation would be remedied with the success of several young Romanians in a recent competitive examination, and he requested the Secretariat to expedite their recruitment. He hoped that more Romanians would be invited to join the staff even after his country came within the desirable range, since it wished to be represented at all levels, the level of posts being as important as their number in ensuring proper representation.

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(Mr. Dinu, Romania)

37. Referring to the report of the Secretary-General on secondment from government service (A/C.5/45/12), he said that Romania had revised its previous secondment policy and would be honoured if some of its nationals were invited to serve in a permanent capacity. Every case should, however, be reviewed on its individual merits, in consultation with all the parties concerned, namely the Member State, the Secretariat and the staff member. There was much to be gained from a judicious use of secondment, particularly when it was combined with career appointments. Secondment was neither good nor bad in itself; it all depended on how it was used and, in the case of the staff concerned, on whether a true choice was open to them.

38. He stressed the important role of competitive examinations in ensuring a better geographical balance among the staff. The extension of national examinations to posts at the P-3 level was a promising possibility, and his delegation looked forward to concrete proposals in that regard. While information was sought on the additional cost of holding such examinations, his delegation was convinced that the benefits would outweigh the costs. Competitive examinations in general played an important part in identifying the best internal candidates for promotion to the Professional category, and should therefore be continued as an invaluable means of offering General Service staff access to fruitful careers in the Professional category.

39. He congratulated the Secretariat on its success in bringing the proportion of women in the Secretariat closer to the 30 per cent target set by the General Assembly, as indicated in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/45/548) which showed a net increase of almost 10 per cent over the previous 10 years, even at a time of retrenchment and staff reduction. The target did not, however, reflect the need to improve the status of women in the Secretariat in qualitative terms; that called for additional efforts. The promotion of women to the higher levels, including the upper echelon, was long overdue. Meanwhile, continued efforts should be made to achieve a better geographical, political, social, cultural and linguistic balance among women staff in the Secretariat, which would more accurately reflect the diversity of the world community.

40. On the subject of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organisations, his Government had fully accepted the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the applicability of article VI, section 22, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. It concurred with the opinion expressed by the Legal Counsel that the significance of that opinion went far beyond the case considered by the International Court of Justice.

41. On the issue of forced salary payments to Governments by staff members (A/C.5/45/19, para. 24), he informed the Committee that, as of January 1990, his Government had annulled the decree of the previous authorities requiring Romanian nationals on the staff of international organisations to transfer a portion of their salary to the Government. In addition, upon termination of their contracts with international organizations, Romanian nationals were entitled on their return home to be reinstated in posts corresponding to their seniority, taking into

(Mr. Dinu, Romania)

account the period spent as an international civil servant, and to any other legal benefits. The same treatment was applied to their spouses. His Government pledged full respect for the international civil servant status of any Romanian working in international organizations, and would contribute to the establishment of normal and correct relations with those organizations.

42. Mr. AKOLZIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation attached great importance to the permanent renewal and improvement of the Secretariat's working methods. The Secretariat could become a really effective organ if professionals were recruited on a broad geographical basis in accordance with the requirements of the Charter and the established quotas of posts. As a result of the reforms in recent years, the Secretariat's efficiency had increased a little and the number of staff members had been reduced. Progress was also being made in improving the representation of underrepresented States, including the Byelorussian SSR, and the Secretariat's efforts to recruit young professionals were commendable. The administrative reform was of course a long process and many of the improvements called for by Member States were still being implemented. However, the results of the reform could be even more impressive if the Secretariat persisted in its efforts to remove the shortcomings in recruitment practices and allowed no exceptions to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

43. The obstacles to the solution of personnel problems stemmed from the system of permanent contracts. The specialized agencies, which sought a constant influx of specialists with knowledge of the latest developments in the relevant fields, had a much smaller proportion of permanent staff than the United Nations Secretariat. At present some 70 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution in the Secretariat were occupied by permanent staff, and that rate would apparently increase still further as a result of the Secretariat's decision to award permanent contracts to staff who were successful in the competitive examinations. The preponderance of permanent over fixed-term staff did not enhance the efficiency of the Organization's work, for it impeded the replacement of staff members who could not carry out the new programmes. A staff representative had himself acknowledged in the Committee that changes in professional knowledge were happening so fast that members of the Secretariat would lag behind unless adequate resources were provided for retraining.

44. The continuing practice of awarding permanent contracts to nationals of overrepresented countries was particularly unacceptable, for it closed off access to Secretariat posts to nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented countries. The Secretariat must, of course, have a contingent of permanent staff with experience of the Organization, but it should not exceed 30 to 35 per cent.

45. Much clearly remained to be done to increase the representation of women in the Secretariat, despite all the efforts to solve the problem. The main obstacle was that the existing procedure for the recruitment of women served the interests of only the small number of Member States in which headquarters cities were located. A joint effort to find generally acceptable solutions must be made by Member States and the Secretariat.

(Mr. Akolzin, Byelorussian SSR)

46. The Secretary-General's report on secondment was particularly useful, and his delegation shared his conclusions about the advantages of the practice. Secondment was an important means of securing qualified and experienced specialists for the Organization and it helped to ensure a proper balance between fixed-term and permanent staff. The problems of secondment described in the report could easily be overcome by Member States and the Secretariat, and the Byelorussian SSR intended to work towards that end.

47. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), after commending the efforts made to improve the working conditions of the staff and paying tribute to the staff itself, said that the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution - 2,561 out of a total of 14,043 assigned to the Secretariat of the United Nations - was insufficient, and should be increased. Furthermore, the time had come, in the interests of equitable geographical distribution, to establish parity between the membership and contribution factors used as the basis for the system of desirable ranges, as called for by General Assembly resolution 42/220, and to re-examine the coefficient assigned to the population factor.

48. To judge from the information given in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541), further efforts should be made to enable unrepresented Member States to be represented in the Secretariat; for their part, the States concerned should submit candidates. The notable improvement in the situation of underrepresented States was particularly appreciable at a time of retrenchment and reduction. The report of the Secretary-General failed to deal with the case of overrepresented States and thus presented an incomplete picture of the situation. As could be seen from table C of annex I to the report, there had been no improvement in the representation of Member States of developing countries at the senior and policy-formulating levels of the Secretariat; it had in fact declined between 1986 and 1990. His delegation accordingly reiterated its request to the Secretariat to take all necessary steps to improve the representation of the developing countries, especially at those levels. Morocco was among the countries which were not well represented.

49. The proportion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had still not attained the 30 per cent target. Although some progress had been made, particularly with regard to the recruitment of women, further efforts were needed to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. The proposed re-examination of measures already adopted should be carried out with due regard for the representation of women from developing countries, which was still inadequate.

50. It was a matter of serious concern to note from the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/45/10) that the number of cases of arrest and detention of officials of United Nations organizations was still very high and that the situation with regard to previously reported cases had worsened. His delegation supported the measures taken by the Secretary-General on behalf of those officials and urged States which violated the privileges and immunities of international civil servants by arbitrarily detaining them to put an end to those violations and release all victims. All States were bound to respect the privileges and

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(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

immunities of those officials to enable them to discharge their duties properly and independently, and the officials, for their part, must refrain from any interference in the internal affairs of States.

51. Faced as it was with new challenges and an increasingly important role, the Organization needed more than ever to function efficiently. The administrative reform initiated in 1986 had contributed to greater efficiency, but had also affected the morale of the staff, who were more than ever vital to the Organization. While competence and integrity remained the prerequisites for recruitment, keeping persons of high calibre on the staff depended largely on working conditions and career prospects. In that connection, he recalled the General Assembly's request to the Secretary-General, in resolution 44/185 A, to complete his efforts towards the development of a comprehensive career development plan for all staff and to develop a personnel policy to increase the mobility of staff. Some progress had been made in the area of career development for staff in the General Service category, and he hoped that the handbook referred to by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management could be made available to the staff concerned as soon as possible. Other measures should be adopted to ensure adequate, equitable and transparent promotion procedures and recognize merit through a rational performance evaluation and reporting system. The comprehensive career development plan should cover all staff members. His delegation hoped that the Secretariat would spare no effort in implementing the General Assembly resolutions on that question.

52. His delegation was gratified to note the progress made in training activities, and requested further information on the establishment of information centres, the training programme for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the self-study courses in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

53. The idea put forward by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in his introductory statement (A/C.5/45/SR.15) that staff promotions from the entry levels up to the middle levels should depend on merit and seniority even when a post at the higher level might not be available was an extremely interesting one which merited serious examination, including consideration of its immediate and long-term impact. His delegation, convinced as it was that staff motivation was one of the best ways of improving the efficiency of the Organization, was in favour of any measure to improve the well-being of staff members.

54. Miss ROBERTS (Jamaica) said that the task of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management was a formidable one, for the Secretariat must be equipped to respond to the enhanced role of the United Nations in the new international climate. The United Nations could achieve its lofty goals only with a staff of the highest integrity and dedication. The Secretary-General had pointed out that it was difficult to recruit such staff because the Organization no longer offered an adequate level of remuneration. Furthermore, if the Secretariat was to perform its tasks properly, Member States must be confident that the United Nations system would be responsive to their needs. Her delegation was glad that the

(Miss Roberts, Jamaica)

Assistant Secretary-General had a full appreciation of that prerequisite and that efforts would be made to reduce the number of underrepresented States and identify high-quality candidates for recruitment.

55. The failure to reach the 30 per cent target for the representation of women in the Secretariat was disappointing, as was the failure to appoint any women to posts above the D-2 level in the past year. The part played by women in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, referred to in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/548), demonstrated that women were a force to be reckoned with. There was therefore no logical explanation for the disparity, especially in higher-level posts, between the numbers of women and men in the Secretariat. Furthermore, the number of women recruited from developing countries should be increased to 50 per cent from the current level of 38 per cent.

56. Her delegation was unhappy about the continuing practice of secondment, for an international civil servant should not have a conflicting loyalty to his Government. Moreover, the Secretary-General's report indicated that secondment could have other disadvantages. The Organization should review its secondment procedures in order to ensure that all parties to an agreement had no doubts about the nature of the individual contract.

57. Although the Assistant Secretary-General had addressed the vexing question of the classification system, the new proposals for promotion might adversely affect recruitment. Efforts to promote staff members who had performed satisfactorily but for whom a higher-level post was not available were of course welcome, but her delegation would like to have more information about the procedures involved.

58. With regard to the question of respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system, her delegation attached the highest priority to the security of staff members and urged all Governments to ensure that their privileges and immunities were fully respected.

59. The staff representatives had indicated that little or nothing had been done about the comprehensive career development plan. An effort must be made to implement the plan, for staff must know that they had room to grow. On the thorny subject of the administration of justice, it was heartening to see that staff members had adequate recourse to the appeals process and could at least air their grievances.

60. At the previous session her delegation had supported the recommendation to increase staff salaries by 5 per cent because the well-being and morale of the staff constituted the backbone of any well-run organization. The success or failure of the United Nations would depend on the performance of its staff members, and they had already shown that they were up to the task. Member States must provide them with the opportunity to continue to excel.

61. Mr. SILGA (Burkina Faso) said that the importance of personnel questions was evident, especially at a time of renewed interest by the international community in an increased role for the United Nations. His delegation welcomed the

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(Mr. Silga, Burkina Faso)

Secretariat's efforts to improve the situation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries, most of which were developing countries. The level of qualifications of the nationals of such countries was not the issue, for they had demonstrated their capacity to supply highly qualified staff. Recruitment from the developing countries must therefore be stepped up.

62. The underrepresentation of the developing countries at the higher levels was also a source of concern, for their share of posts at the D-1 and higher levels had declined, while that of the developed countries had increased, contrary to the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The geographical composition of the Secretariat must be improved, and no post should be monopolized by any country or group of countries.

63. With regard to the status of women in the Secretariat, the figures spoke for themselves; for example, only two top-level posts were occupied by women. The situation was far from consistent with the provisions of resolution 44/185 C. The percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had indeed increased, and his delegation hoped that the target of 30 per cent would be achieved. Care must be taken, however, not to accentuate the imbalance in the geographical distribution of posts. The example given in paragraph 49 of the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541) was not reassuring in that respect. The report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/45/548) also indicated that the percentage of women from developing regions remained far below 30 per cent. The information missions referred to in paragraph 16 of that report should be increased. The United Nations could not achieve its full potential until women occupied their proper place in it. His delegation therefore supported all the measures designed to achieve that end and counted on their effective implementation.

64. The practice of secondment could offer advantages for the Organization, but his delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 of his report (A/C.5/45/12). It supported the Secretary-General's proposal that the secondment procedures should be clarified, for that would help to avoid difficulties in the future.

65. The Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations system contained disturbing information, but it was encouraging to note that the great majority of Member States respected the privileges and immunities in question. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that the combined efforts of Member States and international organizations could produce positive results. Accordingly, the current difficulties between the Organization and certain Member States did not justify calling into question the good faith of those States in their support for the United Nations or constitute a reason for denying a Member State its right to request aid from the United Nations system.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
25th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 7 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (*continued*) (A/45/541 and A/45/548; A/C.5/45/3, A/C.5/45/10 and Corr.1, A/C.5/45/11, A/C.5/45/12, A/C.5/45/18 and A/C.5/45/19)

1. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that for the Twelve it was important to ensure the sound management of the human resources of the United Nations and to take into account, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in the employment of the staff. The Twelve reiterated their full support of the Secretary-General in his capacity as the chief administrative officer of the Organization and of the prerogatives and functions conferred on him by the Charter.

2. The representation of the States members of the Community in posts subject to geographical distribution was collectively below the mid-point of the desirable ranges. It was to be hoped that that situation would be taken into account in the recruitment process. The Twelve were ready to participate in the review of the desirable ranges, which pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/220 should take place at the present session, although in their opinion there was no need to modify the decision taken by the General Assembly at its forty-second session.

3. The holding of competitive examinations for external and internal candidates might help to improve the composition of the Secretariat and ensure a proper representation of Member States. The Twelve welcomed the introduction of competitive examinations for posts at the P-3 level and hoped that the Secretary-General would use the examinations with flexibility. However, competitive examinations should not constitute the only recruitment tool, and other means of competitive selection might be used for external recruitment at levels above P-3. Recruitment to all posts, regardless of the type of appointment, should be open to nationals of all Member States. In that connection the Twelve welcomed the fact that the holding of competitive examinations had improved the representation of some States members of the Community. The only practical purpose of the grouping of Member States was to serve as a basis for comparing statistical data. The degree of representation of Member States was a matter which was better considered individually rather than on the basis of the groups described in paragraphs 15 to 26 of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/541).

4. The report on the administration of justice in the Secretariat (A/C.5/45/11) showed that the introduction of new procedures had improved the situation in that area. Although the number of appeals had increased, the practice of resolving them at the preliminary stage seemed to be effective, and in many cases the procedure had been substantially shortened. Furthermore, the consolidation of the secretariats of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint Disciplinary Committee had led to a greater rationalization of procedures. Despite those encouraging developments, the level of resources which had to be allocated to the appeals and disciplinary machinery was a matter of concern, and perhaps the Secretary-General could address that issue in his next report.

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(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

5. The question of the improvement of the status of women was dealt with in two different documents: in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/45/541, paras. 36 to 43) and in a separate report (A/45/548). It would be better to bring the information together in a single document in order to avoid duplication. Although some progress had been made in the matter through the application of special measures to reach the target fixed for the end of 1990, the Secretary-General should continue to improve the status of women in the Secretariat in all respects, and for that purpose he would need the active co-operation of Governments. The Twelve encouraged the Secretary-General to do his best to achieve the target set in the medium-term plan, i.e. to increase the representation of women by one percentage point each year. In that connection it might perhaps be useful to review the still unimplemented recommendations of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat in the light of factors such as resource availability.

6. Secondment was a very complex procedure which should be reviewed. The changes announced by the Soviet Union with respect to the recruitment of Soviet citizens by international organizations were welcome, as was the approach outlined by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/45/12), and the Twelve hoped that the relevant amendments to the Staff Regulations would be put to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

7. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria) said that personnel questions should be dealt with pragmatically and that Member States should stop viewing them as a battleground for the pursuit of their political interests. It was also time to abolish the practice of reserving certain senior posts for certain Member States in violation of General Assembly resolutions 33/143, 35/210, 41/206 and 43/224.

8. The geographical distribution of posts was still not balanced, owing to the continued recruitment of nationals of overrepresented countries. The measurement of representation by grouping States by geographical region or by economic criteria was not a conclusive indicator. The only real measurement was the representation of each individual country.

9. His delegation had supported the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution and regretted that the target set for the end of 1990 would not be achieved. The percentage of women occupying senior posts was extremely unsatisfactory, for only two out of 41 heads of departments or offices were women. However, the recent increase in the number of women at the D-2 level from eight to ten demonstrated the Secretary-General's good intentions and gave grounds for hope that the target of 35 per cent by 1995 would be reached. Co-operation between Member States and the Secretariat was essential if the representation of women in the Secretariat was to be increased; to that end it might be useful to designate focal points in the permanent missions to the United Nations in order to facilitate the recruitment of women, as the Secretary-General had requested. His mission had already designated a focal point and had so informed the Secretariat, but so far the focal point had not been used.

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(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

10. Secondment was a useful means of recruiting staff members, but his delegation condemned the abuses of the practice described in documents A/C.5/45/12 and A/C.5/45/19 which constituted a violation of Article 100, paragraph 2, of the Charter. In that context it welcomed judgement No. 482 of the Administrative Tribunal which further strengthened the independence of the international civil servant.

11. His delegation fully supported the measures taken by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff and it welcomed the progress made in the improvement of career development. At the same time it strongly condemned the violations of the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and supported all actions taken by the Secretary-General to redress what was an unacceptable situation. As a host country to organizations of the United Nations system, Austria reaffirmed its commitment to respect fully the privileges and immunities of international civil servants.

12. Ms. MOSS (Bahamas) said that the effective functioning of the world order required an international civil service which combined expertise, common sense, objective judgement and moderation, which facilitated the harmonization of the conflicting interests of Governments, and which played a key role in securing a balance between national sovereignty and international responsibility, a difficult task in a world of competing sovereign States. The highly political nature of the United Nations underlined the necessity of having an impartial international civil service and at the same time made its achievement more complicated.

13. Apparently, an increasing number of Member State was less willing to observe their Charter obligations with respect to the independence of the Secretariat. That created a vicious circle in which other States tended to follow suit for fear of losing their stake in the Secretariat. The problem must be addressed as a matter of priority because it put at risk the building of a truly international Secretariat. Unfortunately, the full co-operation and understanding of Governments was still not forthcoming. It could not be in the interest of the international community or of individual Member States if the obstacles to securing an independent Secretariat made it even more difficult to recruit highly competent and dedicated men and women on a broad geographical basis.

14. In order to secure balance and efficiency in the Secretariat it was necessary to pay attention to the factors which inhibited productivity and the maintenance of high standards and to the ingredients of a career development plan which would give satisfaction both to the staff and to the Organization. The success of the plan proposed by the Office of Human Resources Management would depend on the establishment of a training programme which supplied suitable staff for the effective execution of programmes.

15. The objectivity and impartiality required in United Nations work meant that Member States must refrain from exerting pressure on the Secretariat in order to promote national objectives. At the same time, the Secretariat must be aware of the difficulties faced by Governments and do everything possible to facilitate

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their support for the decisions of intergovernmental organs. It was encouraging to note the indications of growing mutual confidence and good faith between Member States and the Secretariat, as displayed during the consideration of difficult issues, which heralded the replacement of an age of suspicion and anxiety by one of trust and reciprocity. That spirit of promoting the interests of the Organization over national interests should be reflected in greater transparency with regard to appointments at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels, whose functions were of critical importance in the era now beginning.

16. The fact that no woman had ever been proposed as a candidate for the post of Secretary-General showed how much remained to be done to achieve equality between men and women, as stipulated in the Charter. The problem involved economic, legislative and human rights issues but was essentially a question of establishing equal opportunities and real justice for women. If women were to be equitably represented in the Secretariat, simultaneous account must be taken of cultural, social and bureaucratic variables, including reforms to the machinery for administration of justice and the institution of flexible working hours.

17. The increased percentage of women at the P-4 and P-5 levels was encouraging because it raised the number of possible candidates for promotion to posts at the D-1 and higher levels. Missions also provided an opportunity for women to acquire experience, and the high percentage of women who served in Namibia and Nicaragua was a positive development. The possibility of recruiting staff members' spouses also deserved consideration. The Governments of unrepresented or underrepresented States should endeavour to submit suitable candidates, and women in particular. The proportion of posts subject to geographical distribution was so small that the continuing failure fully to implement the recruitment directives established by the Assembly - some at the time when the Organization was founded - was unacceptable. Secondment and fixed-term contracts constituted viable interim solutions provided that the balance and independence of the Secretariat were maintained.

18. The huge rise in the number of cases of arrest, detention or disappearance of staff members was alarming, and the need to comply with Article 105 of the Charter, which stated the privileges and immunities of officials, must therefore be reiterated. The basic objective of the special status accorded to staff members was to provide them with the protection required for the Organization to carry out the delicate and sometimes unpopular tasks entrusted to it. Staff members, for their part, must refrain from any action which might be incompatible with their position as international civil servants responsible only to the Organization.

19. Mr. PANOV (Bulgaria) said that the success of the administrative and budgetary reforms under way at the United Nations depended to a large extent on the solution of a broad range of personnel questions and required co-operation between the Secretariat and Member States. For the purposes of recruitment, the principles of staff efficiency and competence and of the equitable geographical distribution of posts were complementary. One way of meeting the latter requirement might be through the establishment of a system of controlled selection, designed to maintain the representation of each State within its desirable range and to ensure that there was no discrimination in the appointment and promotion of staff members.

(Mr. Panov, Bulgaria)

20. The target of placing women in 35 per cent of the posts subject to geographical distribution must be pursued during the coming five-year period. Unfortunately, there were still States, such as his own, which were not represented by any women in the Secretariat.

21. The increase in the percentage of permanent contracts, and the corresponding reduction in the number of fixed-term contracts, had certain advantages but could also complicate the mobility of personnel and make it more difficult to solve problems of inefficiency. The resumption of external recruitment would be of great benefit in eliminating the tendency towards underrepresentation of those States whose nationals were mostly appointed on fixed-term contracts. Meanwhile, his country fully supported the efforts of the International Civil Service Commission to solve the problem of supplementary payments and deductions from salaries. It also supported the proposals concerning promotion mentioned by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in his introductory statement and the effective application of recruitment procedures for posts subject to geographical distribution set forth in General Assembly resolution 35/210.

22. Mr. TSOKODAYI (Zimbabwe) associated himself with those delegations which had requested that the Secretary-General step up his efforts to ensure the equitable geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat, requiring more extensive use of national competitive examinations. He could not over-emphasize the need to increase the representation of women and to ensure that all Member States, especially the developing countries, were duly represented at the senior levels.

23. His Government was taking the administrative measures required to redress the anomaly referred to in the Secretary-General's report on respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations (A/C.5/45/10). The competent authorities were making arrangements, together with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, to work out a mutually acceptable solution.

24. Mr. KOCATÜRK (Turkey) noted efforts to ensure that the representation of Member States in the Secretariat fell within desirable ranges but pointed out that the percentage of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States remained high. With respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/185 A, he was concerned by the continuing overall imbalance in the distribution of senior-level posts, as well as by the fact that the percentage of women in the Secretariat had increased by only 1.39 per cent, falling far short of the 30 per cent target set for 1990.

25. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that the Organization's need for an impartial and independent Secretariat distinguished by the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity was now more important than ever if it was to perform its complex tasks in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and particularly the additional responsibilities with which it had been entrusted in the fields of peace-making, peace-keeping and development. It was therefore essential to recruit only the most qualified personnel for employment in the Secretariat. In that connection, his country strongly supported the holding of competitive examinations

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(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

for the recruitment of personnel at the national level and for the promotion of staff members who wished to move from the General Service to the Professional category. If those examinations were conducted properly, they represented a fair and effective way of recruiting qualified and competent candidates for the Secretariat. He commended the work carried out so far by the Secretary-General and urged him to step up his efforts in that area.

26. Posts subject to geographical distribution were an important element of the composition of the Secretariat because they ensured that each Member State was duly represented. He was therefore pleased to note that the number of underrepresented Member States had declined over the past year and hoped that the situation would continue to improve in coming years. He also hoped that the Secretary-General would give particular attention to the recruitment of staff members from the 11 unrepresented Member States and that the States concerned would assist the Secretary-General by submitting suitable candidates for vacant posts. It was, however, disappointing to note, from table C in annex I of document A/45/541, that the representation of developing countries in posts subject to geographical distribution had declined during the period from 1986 to 1990. The Secretary-General should take urgent steps to reverse that tendency at the earliest opportunity. In that context, it should be reiterated that no Secretariat post must be considered the exclusive preserve of a Member State or group of States and that the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be observed. Meanwhile, the effects of post reductions on geographical distribution, particularly at the senior levels, should be closely monitored and the resulting imbalances corrected.

27. It was satisfying to note that the number of women occupying posts subject to geographical distribution amounted to 28.3 per cent of the total in June 1990, although the 30 per cent target established for that year had not yet been achieved. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would in the years to come continue his efforts to increase the number of women in those posts with added vigour and that women from developing countries would achieve broader representation in posts, including those at the senior and policy-formulating levels. His country supported the proposal whereby 35 per cent of posts subject to geographical distribution should be held by women before the end of 1995; these would otherwise be an undesirable imbalance.

28. With respect to the review of desirable ranges for the geographical distribution of staff, account must be taken of the weight of the population factor, together with the membership and contribution factors. The weight of the population factor should be restored to its 7.2 per cent, as it had been in 1987, before being reduced to 5 per cent.

29. His country wished to emphasize the importance of career development for Secretariat staff. It had also taken note of the Secretary-General's efforts, and the positive results of those efforts, in connection with the administration of justice in the Secretariat (A/C.5/45/11). It believed that the question of setting up a United Nations ombudsman's office should be carefully reviewed.

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(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

30. With respect to the recruitment of staff members on secondment (A/C.5/45/12), he fully endorsed the view that the secondment system was a means of obtaining skilled and experienced staff for the Secretariat. Despite some disadvantages, its overall impact had been positive and beneficial. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would take appropriate steps to strengthen the system, particularly in the light of the judgement given by the Administrative Tribunal.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.